

## The IUGLS Final St. Clair River Report

### Scientific Rigour?

The release of the final St. Clair River Report of the International Upper Great Lakes Study (IUGLSB) has been delayed until December 15, 2009.

- The public comments, many of which were highly critical - e.g., Great Lakes United's, U.S. National Wildlife Federation's, Great Lakes Keepers', Georgian Bay Forever's – were not posted by the Study Board on their website until today.
- Bill Bialkowski's profound scientific critique on behalf of Georgian Bay Forever (GBF) will not be responded to until sometime after December 15, 2009.
- The conclusion that no remediation is needed in the St Clair River was originally based on the mistaken interpretation of the orders of the IJC that only human-induced causes of increased conveyance of the St. Clair River should be considered by the Study; however, the IJC Commissioners recently ordered the Study to consider all causes including natural ones.
- The IUGLS has acknowledged that the St. Clair River flows have been underestimated since 1986; yet the Study concluded that the 5% increased conveyance has since 2000 somehow been partially reversed even though the Study claims the riverbed is entirely hardened and is not eroding;
- The Study concluded that the riverbed is entirely armoured and stable; this despite the fact that the work commissioned for the IUGLSB by the highly respected team from the renowned Woods Hole Research Center found “*strongly downstream transport pathways*” of sediment.
- The Study reported that the 1971 bathymetry simply missed the largest 60+ foot-deep scour hole; this despite the fact that the Study's researcher from the University of Illinois reported: “*the 1971 survey was sufficiently dense that it could not have missed this deep pool had it been there;*”
- The 2004 GBF-sponsored Baird Report, the March 2009 IUGLS-sponsored Baird Study, and Bill Bialkowski's recent analysis for GBF all peg the conveyance increase at 10% - 6 times the amount of water diverted at Chicago or 12 billion gallons a day (BGD) – double the Study's Board's conclusion of the amount of increase in conveyance;
- All of the Study's hydraulic projects were required to use the same data based on the assumption that the west side of the river is 1 metre deep along the upper 5 kms. (2mi.). This assumption was based on an incorrect extrapolation, not a true measurement. The actual depth along that stretch of the river, as any local fisher knows, is 5 to 8 metres. This resulting error in the bathymetry used by all the scientists led to significantly underestimated conclusions about the amount of increased conveyance.
- This, along with the now posted peer reviews, refutes the Study's assertion that the increase in conveyance is only 5% (7-14cms) and supports the higher increased conveyance of 10% (23cms).
- When asked at public meetings, the Study Board said the 5% increase did not justify remediation. When asked what would justify remediation they said they did not know. It seems reasonable that a 5% increase or loss of 6 BGD or three times the Chicago diversion would justify remediation?
- The IJC has had “independent peer reviews” carried out of almost all the Study's projects – except the RMA2 model work completed by W.F. Baird that found the conveyance increased by 23cm. Instead the Study Board has posted their own rebuttal. Why did Baird's work not undergo the same “independent peer review”?
- There is infrastructure and green energy funding available in the US now. However, one of the reports completed for the Study has suggested possible flexible measures, such as submerged turbines, that would both generate electricity and reduce the outflow when appropriate; but the

Study Board told the White House that nothing is needed in the St Clair River and may miss these green projects missing a funding opportunity..

The west side of the St Clair River is not a natural, shallow shoreline; it has been hardened with a steel wall. Depth is 5-8 metres, not 1 metre.



### **Missed Opportunity**

At a green infrastructure meeting in the White House, the Study Board stated that there was no need of any remediation in the St Clair River. In fact, as one of the Study's Special Projects reported, the three deep scour holes could safely hold many submerged turbines, which would produce green energy and reduce the outflow when appropriate. Once water levels drop on all the Great Lakes, it will be much more difficult to deal with this issue. Right now, with levels above the long-term average on Lakes Erie and Ontario, but still below the long-term average on Lakes Michigan and Huron/Georgian Bay, it would be possible to return some of the lost water to Michigan/Huron with no significant impact on the lower lakes.

### **The Public: Consulted or Insulted?**

- The Study has decided that the voiced opinions of the 2,000 members of the public who attended the public meetings, though registered on tape as being mostly quite critical of the Draft Report's conclusions, can be ignored since they make up such a small number of the 30 million people who live around the Great Lakes. The 50 written submissions, some from people and groups with considerable scientific and personal experience, were posted at the last minute with the negative ones critiqued.
- The Public Interest Advisory Group (PIAG), though given what looked in print like a broad mandate, was told only to corroborate the Study's findings and to be helpful in public relations. Georgian Bay Forever and Great Lakes United (GLU) each had a representative on this committee. Both of these representatives do not concur with the PIAG's Report that states that the public is in agreement with the Study's findings and its do nothing recommendation.

### **Equality for Lake Huron**

- The three other Great Lakes have some form of control structures and a bi-national Control Board. To be treated equally, Lake Michigan/Huron needs flexible control structures in the St. Clair River (e.g. submerged turbines) and a bi-national Control Board to regulate the flow of water from the lake – for the sake of our children and grandchildren as well as for the health of our aquatic ecosystems.

**Michigan Huron/Georgian Bay’s “Crisis Alert Low Levels”  
as defined by the IJC’s 1993 \$20M Levels Reference Study**

1860 1861 1862 1863 1864 1865 1866 1867 1868 1869  
1870 1871 1872 1873 1874 1875 1876 1877 1878 1879  
1880 1881 1882 1883 1884 1885 1886 1887 1888 1889  
1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895 1896 1897 1898 1899  
1900 1901 1902 1903 1904 1905 1906 1907 1908 1909  
1910 1911 1912 1913 1914 1915 1916 1917 1918 1919  
1920 1921 1922 1923 1924 **1925 1926** 1927 1928 1929 channels dredged  
1930 1931 1932 **1933 1934 1935 1936 1937** 1938 1939 channels dredged  
1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949  
**1950** 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959  
1960 1961 1962 **1963 1964 1965** 1966 1967 1968 1969 channels dredged  
1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979  
1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989  
1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999  
**2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008** 2009 **no official dredging took place**

**Bolded** years show when water levels fell below the “Crisis Alert”

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**Mr. Schatz can provide French-language comments**