

INTERNATIONAL LAKE SUPERIOR BOARD OF CONTROL

Minutes of the March 9, 2005 meeting

The International Lake Superior Board of Control met on March 9, 2005 in a conference room at the Javits Federal Building, New York City. Colonel Johnston convened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. The attendees were:

United States

Canada

Board Members

COL G.E. Johnston (Alt.)

Mr. C. McLeod

Secretaries

Mr. J. Kangas

Mr. D. Fay

Regulation Representatives

LTC D. Lauzon
Mr. S. Thieme (Alt.)

Mr. D. Fay

Associates

Dr. M. Colosimo
Mr. D. Sawruk
Ms. L. Whelan

Mr. R. Caldwell
Mr. T. McAuley
Mr. A. McPhee
Mr. V. Lundhild
Dr. P. Pilon
Mr. C. Southam

Item 1. Approval of Agenda

An item was added to Other Business on upcoming Environment Canada changes (Item 9.5). Mr. McPhee noted that Mr. Lundhild will be taking over for him in support to the Board from Brascan Power (Great Lakes Power Ltd.). The Board expressed its appreciation to Mr. McPhee for his support over the years and wished him well in his new assignment within Brascan Power.

Item 2. Update on Hydrologic Conditions and Regulation

Mr. Thieme provided the Board with an update on current conditions, water supplies, an outlook for Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron levels, and Lakes Superior/Michigan-Huron water balance parameters. The Board noted the following factors:

- Water supplies to the Lake Superior basin were above average in September, October, December and February, and below average in November and January. The supplies to Lakes Michigan-Huron were above average in December, January, and February and below average in September, October, and November.
- Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron levels are below average, but above levels of last year. Lake Superior was between 2 and 10 cm (1 and 4 in.) below average for the past six months. On March 9, Lake Superior was at elevation 183.23 m (600.15 ft.), 2 cm (1 in.) below average. Lakes Michigan-Huron were between 25 and 32 cm (10 and 13 in.) lower than average during the past six months. On March 9, they were at 176.10 m (577.76 ft.), 24 cm (p in.) below average.
- Lake Superior outflows have been slightly below to near normal, and were as specified by Regulation Plan 1977-A. It was noted that the 50% forecast currently shows a setting of 5 gates

open in the Compensating Works in May, and 4 gates open in June. The Board noted that a more active public information program would be needed as it has been several years since the gate setting was that high. The Corps will work with the Coast Guard to keep the public informed.

- Mr. Thieme presented the Board with a range of projected levels for the next 6 months, along with slides showing how levels compare to previous years. With average supplies, Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron levels are expected to be well above chart datum. Ponding should not have to be curtailed this spring or summer.
- Lake Superior is closer to average than Lakes Michigan-Huron using either the 1900-1986 "standardized departure" data, or data from 1918-2004.
- The Board agreed that outflows specified by the regulation plan be continued.

Item 3. Update on Long Lac and Ogoki Diversions

Mr. Caldwell reported that Ontario Power Generation (OPG) provided the Board with an update on the discharges of the Long Lac and Ogoki Diversions. The Ogoki Diversion into Lake Nipigon (which flows into Lake Superior) averaged 129.1 cms (4,560 cfs) during September 2004 - February 2005. The Long Lac Diversion averaged 60.6 cms (2,140 cfs) for the same period. The total diversion was reported to be 135% of average for the reporting period. Water was spilled northward to the Ogoki River from September through February and from Long Lake from September through November.

Item 4. Hydropower Plant Status

Edison Sault Electric Company: Mr. Sawruk reported that work in their canal was being deferred to 2007 because the expected hydropower allocations this summer would exceed the plant's capacity.

Great Lakes Power: During the previous 6 months, Unit 2 was shut down from November 12 - 19, 2004 for generator repairs. Mr. Lundhild reported that they expect Unit 2 to be out of service for 9 days in May for maintenance, Unit 3 to be out for 4 days (also in May), and Unit 1 to be out for 5 weeks (mid-September to mid-October, 2005).

U.S. Government Plant (USGP): There were no maintenance issues since the last Board meeting.

Item 5. Compensating Works Status

- a. Status:
Mr. Lundhild reported that routine maintenance activities were carried out in 2004. Mr. Thieme reported that the Corps' October 2004 annual inspection found a split gasket on the lift mechanism of Gate 9. This will be repaired under the normal maintenance program.
- b. Plan for 5-Year Inspection:
The Corps of Engineers will conduct the 5-year inspection of its half of the Compensating Works during May 24-25. It was suggested that the underwater camera used to inspect the U.S. gates be made available for inspecting the Canadian gates, also. Mr. Lundhild reported that their 5-year inspection is tentatively scheduled to take place in June. The Board noted that close coordination will be needed in gate movements if the Plan is calling for 4 or 5 gates open during this period. The Board invited the IJC to observe the inspections. A report of the preliminary findings is expected prior to the Fall Appearances.

Item 6. Flow Measurements

Flow measurements at the Compensating Works had been postponed for the past three years, since Lake Superior levels have been similar for several seasons now. Based upon the current levels and outflows forecast, it appears that the plan may call for multiple open gates this summer. This would provide an opportunity for additional flow measurements of the Compensating Works, since all the recent

gate seal repair work is complete. In addition, flow measurements at the three hydropower plants are tentatively planned for this June.

Mr. Sawruk outlined for the Board the efforts of Edison Sault to refine the water usage at the fish laboratory and incorporate the results of last year's flow measurements in their new water accounting software. He noted that the estimated leakage and water use at the laboratory was significantly reduced following further analyses by Lake Superior State University. The flow reporting software is now reporting amounts that are very close (within a couple of percentage points) to the past measured flows. The Board approved the use of the new software. Verification measurements will be taken this summer to compare to the new software's reporting amounts.

Item 7. Peaking and Ponding

Mr. Thieme reported that, due to higher levels than last year and expected outflows, ponding operations will likely not be restricted over the next six months. A letter from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources had been received in response to the Board's request for comments on changing the level at which ponding would be suspended. (The current threshold level is the U.S. Slip gauge chart datum elevation of 176.39 m (578.71 ft.) on IGLD 1985. The proposed new threshold would drop 1 ft., to 176.09 m (577.71 ft.). The Board noted that the references cited in the letter addressed ponding where the changes in levels were likely much greater than experienced on the St. Marys River. The Board agreed to invite the letter's author to the Soo to observe first-hand the hydropower operations and meet with Board representatives.

Item 8. 2005 Meeting With the Public

The Board considered and discussed the format of this year's meeting with the public. A single meeting site, four sites (as in 2004), and two sites were considered. The Board agreed that the Soo area would be one of the sites, as well as another site on Georgian Bay (location to be determined later). The Board agreed that more than two sites presented problems with staffing the sites. The meeting date was set for evening of Tuesday, July 12. The IJC will be invited to attend, also.

Item 9. Other Business

a. Georgian Bay Association

The Board discussed the actions taken by the Great Lakes Boards of Control in response to the IJC's request for comments on the GBA report. The Board noted that it had been asked by the other Great Lakes Boards of Control to take the lead in this issue. It was noted that the perceived fall between Lake Michigan-Huron and Lake Erie water levels were due to a number of issues other than the potential erosion issue identified by the GBA report. Federal agencies were coming to the position that this issue needs to be addressed in the Upper Great Lakes Study. If so, the Plan of Study would likely need to be revised, with subsequent revisions to the personnel and financial resources needed. The Coordinating Committee on Great Lakes Basic Hydraulic and Hydrologic Data is looking at outlining the efforts needed to fully address the water levels issue. The Board agreed to include this issue in its presentation to the IJC in April.

b. Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study

Mr. Kangas discussed the background to this issue. The Board noted that as much technology as possible be used from the current study of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. IJC representatives present at the meeting reported that no funding had been received from either the State Department or Foreign Affairs. This will be discussed between the IJC and Governments the week of April 10. Colonel Johnston suggested that the IJC establish a standing funding source to address this and similar issues.

- c. *Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway Review*
LTC Lauzon discussed the background and recent activities of this issue. He reported that funding to complete the reconnaissance study was significantly less than requested; this may delay its completion.
- d. *New Lock at the Soo*
LTC Lauzon provided a status report on constructing a second lock capable of allowing 1,000-foot vessels to transit. The benefit/cost ratio is less than 1.0; however, it may still be approved on the basis of security and international considerations. The Corps is using a physical model to look at the issue of vortices at the intakes to the filling culverts.
- e. *Environment Canada Changes*
Mr. McLeod noted that the upper management of his agency was in the process of being changed. How programs are managed, and budgets developed, are being changed. As a consequence, the Canadian Member of the Lake Superior Board of Control may be changing. The technical support from Environment Canada to the Board is not expected to change.

Item 10. Review of Semi-annual Progress Report

The Board reviewed and made some changes to the draft Semi-Annual Progress Report. Messrs. Kangas and Woodruff will incorporate the changes, update the data, and distribute advance copies to the IJC.

Item 11. Next Meeting and IJC Appearance

The IJC Appearance is scheduled for 9:45 a.m. on April 12. In addition to its usual presentation, the Board will discuss the Georgian Bay Association report, the new Edison Sault Electric Company water accounting software, the 5-year inspection, and the potential for multiple gates open in the Compensating Works this summer may impact on fishermen, safety and the inspection program.

The reception is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. the evening of April 12.

The Fall meeting is scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday, September 20, in the Niagara region.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

International Lake Superior Board of Control

Board Meeting

March 9, 2005

Conference Room E

Jacob Javits Federal Building, 25 Federal Plaza, New York City

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Update on hydrologic conditions and regulation
3. Update on Long Lac and Ogoki diversions
4. Hydropower plant status
5. Compensating Works status
 - a. Status
 - b. Plans for 5-year Inspection

6. Flow Measurements
7. Peaking and Ponding
8. 2005 Meeting With the Public
9. Other business:
 - a. Georgian Bay Association
 - b. Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study
 - c. Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Seaway Review
 - d. New Lock at the Soo
 - e. Environment Canada changes

10. Review of Semi-annual Progress Report

11. Next meeting and IJC appearance