

.....promoting the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainability of our water-based resources.

SPRING 2022

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL

Volume 13 Number 1

2022 News and Plans

Highlighted in this issue:

- Water Quality
- Invasive Cattail
- Public Water Point
- Lake Level
- Kayak Launch
- FrogFest
- July 4th Parade
- Gov't Island Trails
- Phragmites
- Bats
- Inland Seas Sail

For Details on most topics see our website:
www.lescheneauxwatershed.org.

A sincere Thank You to all who
support our projects !

Below is a stand of aggressive, non-native cattail (*Typha* spp) that shoreline property owners should look for and manage. Please contact the Watershed Council for control method guidance such as raking, cutting or use of benthic tarps.

Invasive cattail growth has rapidly spread, especially in the eastern region of Les Cheneaux during the past several years.



The area without growth in the center of this photo is the result of a team from Loyola Univ (Chicago) physically cutting the plants five years ago. When cut below the water surface cattails tend to drown. Cattails have not regrown in the cut area.

Water Quality: The range in nutrients that feed algae and submersed aquatic weed populations in our channels was within expected levels during the 2021 season. Les Cheneaux water quality remains highly desirable for recreational activities. Areas with normally low phosphorus and algae concentrations reflected the expected pattern as did areas with historically higher phosphorus and algal levels. Even the higher phosphorus and algal concentrations that are found in some areas of Les Cheneaux fail to reach nuisance levels based on limnology criteria and compared to the rest of Lake Huron and the other Great Lakes.



Jackson Barr helped the Watershed water survey crew last summer.



Above: The public water point at Cedarville Harbor became operational late last summer and has been enjoyed by many. It is presently decommissioned but will again be functional soon after ice-out.

LCWC 2022 ACTIVITIES

FrogFest : Jul 9th

ISEA Sail:: Jul 27th & 28th

Annual Meeting: Jul 21st

Where did two feet of Les Cheneaux water go between 2020 and 2021?

After eight years of annual lake rise totaling almost six feet, the level of Lakes Michigan and Huron (MH) dropped twenty-four inches between March and June in 2021. Where did all that water from the historic high lake level go?

Readers are well aware of factors that contribute to high and low water levels of the Great Lakes: precipitation, evaporation, weather patterns and diversions.

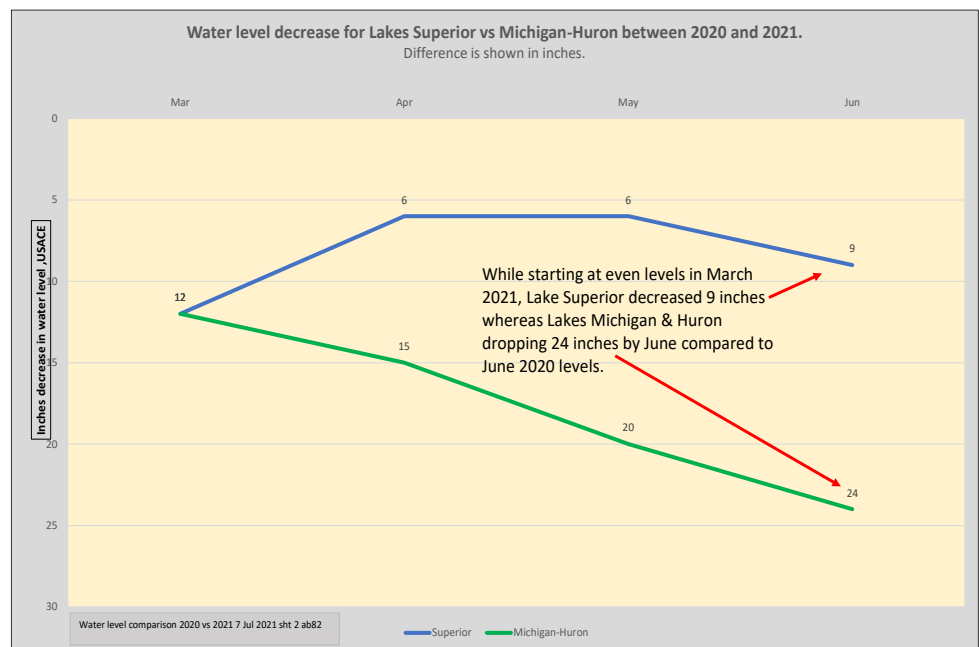
If Lake MH experienced such a dramatic decline in water level and there were no known additional water diversions, then Lake Superior (SUP) would be expected to have experienced a similar decrease. Not so.

This accompanying chart shows that both SUP and MH had twelve inches less water in March of 2021 than in March of 2020, according to the Corps of Engineers (USACE) figures. However, the pattern for SUP became less than one foot below 2020 levels during which time MH continued to decrease in level. By June the SUP level was 9 inches less than the 2020 level but MH was 24 inches lower.

Why was this?

If SUP had unimpeded flow into MH then one would expect levels of both water bodies to shift at similar rates. Was there more outflow from MH? More drought impact on MH? More water withheld in SUP?

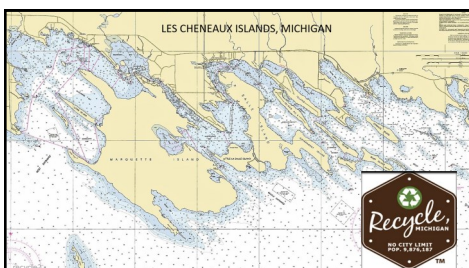
Experience tells us that it was likely the latter. By treaty, the level of SUP is maintained within a predetermined range. There is no such treaty or control on MH. Therefore, when SUP experiences excess water from its watershed then more water is discharged through the St Marys river into MH. This is one reason for the higher levels experienced in MH during the past several years. Similarly, when SUP experiences less water from its watershed then water is withheld using control gates to maintain the SUP level within a specified range. The downstream consequence is that MH experiences even less water than it would receive if SUP were to discharge a nominal volume. Either way, Lake MH levels are adversely affected and the extreme shifts in MH levels exacerbate environmental, community and commercial interests.



How do shoreline communities like Les Cheneaux deal with these issues? Our community members and organizations have been writing letters and submitting position papers to elected leaders at both the State and Federal level for decades. Recipients typically respond with concerned and polite comments indicating that they agree with our position and feel our pain but there has been no discernable action.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is a bi-national organization comprised of appointed representatives from the USA and from Canada whose charge is to address water-centric issues along the border between our two countries. In addition to letter writing during the past several years, many IJC meetings have been attended by Les Cheneaux residents and input provided. The IJC, too, feels our pain but, again, there has been no plan articulated about how, or if, to deal with extreme levels of Lakes SUP, MH or the lower Lakes of Erie and Ontario. As an aside, the level of Lake Ontario is also controlled within specific levels by statute.

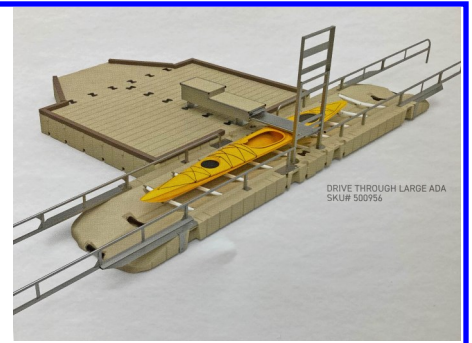
Citizen organizations such as Restore Our Waters International (ROWI, "restoreourwater.org.") is comprised of advocate representatives from the USA and Canada. ROWI has actively engaged both Ottawa and Washington DC about addressing the extreme high and extreme low water issue of the Great Lakes, especially for the "middle lakes" of MH. ROWI's position is backed by volumes of data, engineering models, factual examples and well-spoken representatives with credentials in their respective fields. ROWI has engaged multiple sister groups and has support from them. During the past ten years their proposals have yet to gain traction with any governmental agency having the ability or interest to address, commit and deal with extreme lake levels. Stay tuned.





Pat Wilson shares her knowledge of nature with a new generation.

KAYAK LAUNCH: The Watershed Council, in conjunction with Clark Twp, and support from LCCF, LCIA, MEA, businesses and private donors will install an ADA-compliant kayak/canoe launch at Cedarville Harbor this summer. A similar launch is planned as part of the Hessel Harbor upgrade.



Gerry's vintage John Deere hauls a Bruce Patrick launch loaded with young helpers.



Left: Image from 2012 of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) growth in Cedarville Bay. The "trails" were made by boat propellers as boats made their way through the mat. EWM growth decreased while the level of Lake Huron increased. However, as the Lake level drops we can expect EWM to again become a navigational, environmental and safety issue.

While brushing the Mike Mahoney hiking trails on Government Island, Council members are often treated to the sight of wildflowers like this Gaywing (*Polygala paucifolia*).



FOUR WAYS to provide your continued financial support to LCWC with 501(c)3 status.

- A check sent to our address
- PayPal through our website: lescheneauxwatershed.org
- Through the [LC Community Foundation](#) directed to either our LCWC endowed or unendowed account.
- Funds transferred directly from an IRA to LCWC. This avenue is approved under the new tax code. For details, refer your tax advisor to:

Aside from physical removal, there are no safe methods to minimize EWM growth that are acceptable to the Les Cheneaux community. An exception is the highly effective and safe native biofungicide developed by LCWC for EWM management in 2017. This biological control agent has yet to be commercialized by any company.

Re-new your membership with the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council today! We need your support to preserve the health of our waters!

Membership or Donation to the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council

\$15 _____ Basic Membership

\$25 _____ Spring Peeper

\$50 _____ Green Frog

\$75 _____ Tree Frog

\$100 _____ Leopard Frog

\$500 _____ Blue Heron

\$1,000 _____ Wetland

\$ _____ Water Guardian



<https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/iras/articles/2017-12-04/how-to-donate-your-required-minimum-distribution-to-charity>

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



Non-native Phragmites infestations in LCI are down significantly thanks to help from Cisma (Three Shores Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area of Chippewa, Mackinac and Luce Counties). For each of the past eleven years Cisma has assisted LCWC in managing our non-native phragmites outgrowths. Thanks to Cisma, LCI is on a maintenance program whereby they help manage new patches that appear annually. Mike Stoll is the LCWC liaison to Cisma. Phragmites stands are expected to expand as the water level decreases.



Above: Phragmites survey team and phragmites stand.



By popular demand the schooner, *Inland Seas*, will again be in Hessel on July 27th & 28th. As last year, she will sail twice a day while providing a unique, educational and fun experience for children and adults. The ship's crew will

provide a hands-on experience in water research opportunities at multiple education stations as well as have participants take part in ship handling skills. The event is sponsored by our Watershed Council and is an activity of the Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA). Learn more about ISEA at www.schoolship.org. Ticket sales will begin in May.

Local bat populations. Thanks once again to residents for reporting bat sightings during the past four summers, we now have a better idea of relative numbers of bats as well as their locations around the islands. As reported last season, we have more "Little Brown Bats" than initially thought, but only a small percentage of the bat populations of previous years.



Using our mobile monitoring equipment the Council will improve bat detection accuracy

this summer with the use of fixed monitoring stations to better determine bat numbers and locations throughout the islands. Please continue to report your sightings to LCWC BatMan Scott Myers. Your input will help improve the accuracy of our bat counts and locations.



Top: Now / Below: This Summer!



P.O. Box 578

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL

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