



Shoreline Mayors Take Action

Low Water Levels

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Cause and Effect

Overview of areas contributing to the declining water levels

With approximately 20 percent of the world's fresh water, the Great Lakes are of world importance.

The depleting water levels is a concern on the local, national, and international scale.

The International Joint Commission has identified many reasons for the declining water levels affecting Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes, with record lows in 2012, some of which include:

- Human Action
 - Increasing the conveyance capacity of the St. Clair River
 - Sand and gravel mining, channelization, and maintenance dredging
- Climate Change
- Glacial Adjustments

Water level changes are expected to continue over time due to both human and natural influences.

There is a great need by the Georgian Bay full time and seasonal residents for the water levels to be restored and that measures be taken to compensate for the changes in the St. Clair River.



Beckwith Island – 40 feet more shore width since 2012



Matthew Wells © 2010

Collingwood Harbour

**Note the difference in the number of boats that cannot dock due to low water levels.

Matthew Wells © 2013



The Town of Collingwood is spending over \$412,000 for the installation of new harbour docks due to an increase demand for docking spaces and the pressures of declining water levels

Impact on Tourism

The harsh reality for waterfront communities

- Boaters and tourists are making visitation decisions based upon current water levels
- If tourism numbers are declining, the tourist based industries suffer as well.
 - Hotels
 - Shops
 - Attractions
 - Anglers
- Watercraft limitations and damages
 - Restricted waterways and shallow areas no longer allow for certain watercraft designs to pass through
 - Damaged rudders, motors, and hulls
- Costly upgrades to facilities, docks, and harbours
 - Dredging
 - Relocation
 - Closing





Thornbury, ON
Courtesy of Fox Production Company

Impact on Economy

Loss of jobs, income, and disturbing the shipping routes

Municipalities that rely on the Great Lakes and its waterways for their main source of revenue are at risk of losing their livelihood due to decline in water levels, including those dealing with shipping, aquaculture, fisheries, and tourism.

The 'ripple effect' may then be felt by businesses who rely heavily on the income brought in by the failing industries, such as local shops, downtowns, and recreation centres, and therefore, show signs of struggle as well.

If an industry goes, the effects are echoed throughout the entire community.

Housing value has also become an point of content as issues have been raised about reducing the waterfront property tax assessment and value of homes.



View of the Harbour in the Town of Collingwood

Forecast

What will happen if the water levels continue to decline?

Short Term Risks

Financial Strain of Water Based Businesses

- Millions of dollars in new infrastructure needed to keep the doors open.
- In the Township of the Archipelago alone, it will cost residents approximately 29 million dollars in repairs, restructuring, and modifications to their existing amenities

Marine Staff reductions

- Loss of jobs due to financial strain and decreased business

Closing of Harbours, Waterways, and Docks

- Decreased access for tourism, trade and shipping



Picnic Island - 2011



Picnic Island - 2012



Bayview Park

Bayview Park, , The Town of Blue Mountains
Courtesy of Fox Production Company

Forecast

What will happen if the water levels continue to lower

Long Term Risks

- **Loss of real estate assessment value**
 - Subsequent impact on municipal tax base.
 - Impact unknown but could result in an increase in property tax rates to recoup lost revenue.
- **Accommodative repairs to shoreline properties**
 - Shore walls, water intakes, dockage
- **Stress on aquaculture and marine health**
 - If the low water levels disrupts access to spawning grounds, the health of indigenous fish populations can drastically suffer, along with the fishing industry
- **Spinoff effects - Provincially**
 - Tourism, economic stability of shoreline communities/small businesses, shipping industry, supportive industries



Assistant Marina Manager at Bay Moorings, standing where part of their dredging efforts are taking place.

Suggested Solutions

What exactly are we looking for?

Government funding

Businesses are spending millions of dollars in 2013 to keep their doors open.

Government funding is required through a dollar-for-dollar matching program.

Streamline Approval Processes

Remove the of red tape and expedite dredging and funding approvals.

Immediate Action

Solutions **NEED** to be in place as soon as possible in order to keep the shoreline towns afloat.

Optimistic Future

Help is on the way from International, Federal, Provincial, and Local levels

Awareness of the issues at hand is the starting point for action.

Members of the GLSLCI, Mayors, and the public have begun to voice their concern with the declining water levels in the Georgian Bay area.

The following are just a few of the steps taken by Mayors of the Georgian Bay area to further battle the water levels

Publication of *A Case Book - The harms caused by Low Water Levels in Georgian Bay* which was compiled by Mayors and Leaders from around Georgian Bay. It documents the estimated costs to all shoreline communities as a result of the declining water levels

Meetings with the International Joint Commission, Provincial Leaders, MPs, and dignitaries to discuss local, provincial and international impact.

Minister Peter Kent, Ministry of the Environment

Minister John Baird, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Deputy Minister Matthew King, Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Dr. Kellie Leitch, MP for Simcoe-Grey

Bruce Stanton, MP for Simcoe North

Larry Miller, MP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

Senior Policy advisor from Premiers office

NDP Leader Andrea Horvath

PC Caucus

Marina Operators

Residents

Questions?

On behalf of the Mayors, residents, visitors, and businesses on the shores of Georgian Bay,
Thank You for your time and consideration.

We are all in this together