

LEVELER

E-Newsletter from the Lake Ontario Riparian Alliance

Issue 22 August 3, 2013

Grassroots Public Advocacy for the Protection, Restoration and Conservation
of Lake Ontario Beaches and Riparian Property

In this issue:

- Coincidence or Money Trail? You decide!
 - Ongoing efforts
 - The Future of the South Shore of Lake Ontario
-

COINCIDENCE OR MONEY TRAIL? YOU DECIDE!

According to the International Joint Commission (IJC), Plan 2014 will provide an average annual benefit to the Hydropower entities of \$5.26 million dollars above all the money they make under the current plan. If Plan 2014 lasts as long as the current plan (Plan 58DD), that being 60 years, this will give the hydro power interests an additional total benefit of \$315.6 million dollars.

Just prior to the Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study, the Moses-Saunders Hydropower Plant had to undergo a mandated relicensing for its continued operation by the Federal Energy Regulatory Agency. As part of this procedure, the United States side of the power plant (New York Power Authority, NYPA) granted a number of financial and other incentives to the surrounding areas affected by the plant's operation. When we asked why those areas did not include the shore of Lake Ontario, we were told that the power dam has no effect on lake levels. We all know that this is not true!

We also find it interesting that with any new regulation plan proposed by the IJC, the largest financial benefit goes to the hydroelectric entities in the United States and Canada.

Below is a list of agreed-upon arrangements just for the US side of the Plant:

In October 2003, the Power Authority received a new fifty-year federal license, leading to a host of new economic, environmental and recreational benefits to the region stemming from various agreements. These benefits include:

- A US\$**115M community enhancement fund** for 10 entities represented by the Local Government Task Force, composed of St. Lawrence County, the Towns of Lisbon, Louisville, Massena and Waddington, the Villages of Massena and Waddington.
- \$2M to be provided each year, the Lisbon, Massena and Madrid-Waddington School Districts.
- A funding mechanism likely to produce another **\$10.5M** over the next fifty years, known as the **High Water Flow Adjustment**. The community will also apparently **receive additional money if water levels** are high and flows are increased that generates additional hydropower.
- Approximately **\$19M** in recreational improvements to be completed over the next five years, with more than \$11M for Robert Moses and Coles Creek State Parks and some \$8M at local parks in Lisbon, Louisville, Massena

and Waddington. In addition to renovations and expansions of existing facilities for swimming, boating, camping, hiking and picnicking, many of the projects will bring these sites into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Significantly revised project boundaries following the return of approximately 600 acres of shoreline property to local communities and adjoining landowners. In addition to the conveyance of this acreage, 895 acres of surplus project land were previously conveyed to North County communities, a process that began in early 2001.
- Shoreline stabilization projects to halt or prevent erosion at 31 sites along the project shoreline, with work expected to be completed over a ten-year period, starting in 2004.

In addition to consulting local residents, the Power Authority has worked closely with representatives from the State Department of Environmental Conservation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and New York Rivers United to identify impacts to the St. Lawrence River and the surrounding environment. As part of its new license, NYPA will design, construct, maintain and monitor **Ten Habitat Improvement Projects** throughout the power project's boundaries, at a cost of **\$8.4M**. These projects range from nesting platforms for osprey and loons to hundreds of acres of grassland that provide nesting areas for northern harrier, upland sandpiper, various waterfowl and other birds.

Significant work is also planned for the Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area, built by the Power Authority in the 1950s and managed today by state environmental officials. The NYPA will spend **\$9.4M** to rehabilitate dikes and other water control structures on Wilson Hill.

The impact of the project on eel migration was also studied extensively as part of the licensing process. A new **\$2M eel-passage facility** was constructed with the facility beginning operation on 1 July 2006.

Under the contract, which will be effective on 1 July 2013, the NYPA will make available to Alcoa **478MW of low-cost hydropower for a term of thirty years**. The new contract provides that Alcoa will continue to receive its current allocation of 478MW of hydro (374MW of firm power and 104MW of interruptible power) at its Massena East and West Plants. This allocation accounts for approximately 60% of the generating output on US side of the Moses-Saunders Hydropower Plant.

The above information was obtained from the NYPA web site:

<http://www.waterpowermagazine.com/projectprofiles/projectprofilesfulfilling-a-bold-dream-the-st-lawrence-fdr-power-project/>

We find it disturbing that the river area which wraps itself in the environment and suggests that Plan 2014 will create a more natural pre-project condition for Lake Ontario will keep Lake St. Lawrence relatively flat from May to October for its benefit, will receive the benefit of significant money, while the south shore of Lake Ontario will suffer damages,

Plan 2014, the one being promoted by this area, has the highest economic gains for hydroelectric, both historically and stochastically, and extreme damages to the South Shore.

So let's add it up (assuming the new plan lasts as long as the current plan's longevity of 60 years)

Plan 2014 will give the Hydropower interests over the next 60 years: = \$315.6 million dollars

(Note: This does not include the money produced from current levels of operation, only the improvements above the current levels if Plan 2014 is adopted.) .

The Hydropower interests will spend:

Community enhancement fund for 10 entities = \$115 million dollars

Lisbon, Massena and Madrid-Waddington school districts will receive = \$120 million dollars

When Lake Ontario is high and there is a five-fold increase in the risk of flooding on the south shore. The dam will generate additional electric when compared to the current plan

= \$10.5 million dollars

Recreational improvements = \$19 million dollars

Design, construct, maintain and monitor 10 Habitat Improvement Projects = \$8.4 million dollars

Rehabilitate dikes and other water control structures on Wilson Hill = \$9.4 million dollars

Eel-passage facility = \$2 million dollars

Cost of low cost hydropower = \$???? million dollars

Total benefits to the River from Plan 2014, not including low cost energy= \$284.3 million dollars

At the same time, the **South Shore of Lake Ontario and its recreational boaters**

(according to IJC numbers, which we know to be low-ball accounting) will experience a total **loss = \$167.4 million dollar.**

We still have work to do to get the **International Joint Commission (IJC)** to see the error in their folly of proposing this plan.

In this issue are a number of things we ask you to do:

1. Continue to send comments to the IJC regarding the damages and other effects that you will see from this plan. (LORA has established a web page with a link to the IJC comment page.)

<http://www.loranet.org/comment.htm>

2. Use the links listed below to our two petitions below. If you have not signed them yet, please do so now. Also, please send the petitions to your friends and families for more signatures.
3. Talk to your neighbors about the attempt to damage our properties and boating on the south shore. While we maintain an extensive email list for newsletters and other information, our list is not all-inclusive. We need everybody to help save our shore!
4. Participate in our passive act of resistance to this plan. Send a symbolic "KEY" to Governor Cuomo. Information included in LEVELER 21 (previous issue) on his address and a form letter to be included with key.

Please sign our petitions: Pass them along to your friends and neighbors to sign!

www.stopplan2014.com

Call for action!

The Honorable Louise Slaughter: Fight for a Lake Ontario plan that will not damage the County of Monroe, New York, and the Lake Ontario South Shore - Sign the Petition!

Please join this campaign: <http://chn.ge/184Z9VC>

The Future Of the South Shore of Lake Ontario!



Ray Fishbaugh cottage near "outlet" - Wright's Beach 1952. Charles Nichols digitized the photos

The photo to the left from 1952 was sent to LORA.

The highest water level that year was 248.55 feet.

According to Plan 2014 documents, the trigger for June is 248.06 feet. According to the same IJC documents, the Board of Control will not be able to deviate from the plan until it gets permission from IJC to do so. We all know that, once the lake gets this high, it will surpass the trigger level because the board will not be able to lower water levels quick enough to avoid it.

March 15, 1973

Town of Greece, New York, March 15, 1973

Actual water level = 247.01

Plan 2014 Trigger for March 15 = 246.78

The USACE approached the Town of Greece 4 months prior (December 1972) to the event (**Operation Foresight**), stating that there was nothing it could do and to prepare for the worst. **Will it happen again? Would the IJC act with a forecast to an upcoming disaster, as occurred in 1972-73?**

According to what their people say, they will; but the way the proposal is written, they will not!

In December 1972, the Actual water level was 245.41 (Average for month).
The Plan 2014 trigger for December is 245.90 (Average for month).

The new plan is intended to insure that the lake eventually reaches the trigger levels which are extreme. The operational part of the plan exists not to protect from and prevent damage from extremes; it is there to guarantee that those extremes will occur as often as possible.

Once the lake reaches these extreme high or low levels, the Board of Control (those guys with their hands on the drain) must go to the Commissioners and ask for permission to let more water out or hold more back. Can they say, no? Can they say, let's wait? **Would they have said, "Let's wait," in December 1972?**



Visit www.Loranet.org for more information.

For past newsletters, see <http://loranet.org/levelerarchive/pastissues.htm> .

Final Thought.

It is mentioned quite often that the Homeowners on the south shore should not have built where they did. We at LORA have a response to this:

First, many of the homes were built many years prior to the St. Lawrence River project. The lake due to man's regulation has imposed on these homes.

Second, we have investigated the FEMA flood maps and have discovered that: Contrary to the belief of some proponents to the plan, the affected homes have the same special flood hazard rating of the properties along A Bay. This information is available the FEMA website.