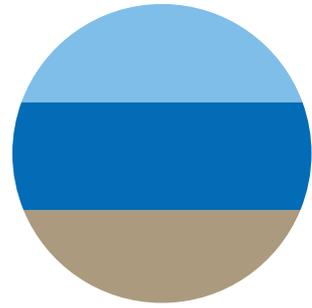


# GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER



SUMMER 2013  
VOL. 4, ISSUE 2

WATER LEVELS, WATER QUALITY, WETLANDS AND INVASIVE SPECIES

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Georgian Bay Forever is a proud member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.



GEORGIAN BAY  
BAYKEEPER

GEORGIAN BAY  
FOREVER



# THE FOLLOWING GEORGIAN BAYERS ARE GENEROUS PATRONS OF GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER

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Ruth and Doug Grant  
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**SUMMER 2013**

Georgian Bay Forever is a community response to the growing need for major research and education projects to sustain the Georgian Bay aquatic ecosystem and the quality of life its communities and visitors enjoy.

We help monitor the Bay's well being, throughout the seasons, year after year.

We fund the research needed to protect the environmental health of Georgian Bay and the surrounding bodies of water. Using our research findings, we inform and educate the general public and governments about any threats to environmental health and propose possible solutions.

Through conferences, workshops and seminars we are educating the Georgian Bay community. By teaming up with reputable institutions we enhance the credibility of our research and we strengthen our ability to protect what's at stake.

Georgian Bay Forever, formerly the GBA Foundation, is a registered Canadian charity (#89531 1066 RR0001). We work with the Great Lakes Basin Conservancy in the United States, as well as other stakeholder groups all around the Great Lakes.

Deeply rooted and broadly drawn, Georgian Bay Forever is steered by lifelong devotees of the Bay. We are committed advocates, educators, environmentalists, realists, idealists, and of course, residents.

#### DIRECTORS

David Parkes, President  
Brenda Drinkwalter  
Leslie Hayes  
Michael Hensel  
Rod Jones  
Gail Krantzberg  
Hugh McLelland  
Robert Ogilvie  
Penny Pepperell  
Michael Perley  
Peter Singer  
Hugh Wilkins

#### Executive Director

David Sweetnam

#### OUR CONTACT DETAILS

PO Box 163  
Caledon, ON  
L7E 5T2  
tel: 905-880-4945

You can reach David Sweetnam, our executive director, at [executivedirector@georgianbayforever.org](mailto:executivedirector@georgianbayforever.org) or at (905) 880 4945 ext 1.

U.S. citizens wishing to make a donation to support our work can do so by giving to:

Great Lakes Basin Conservancy  
PO Box 504, Gates Mills OH  
44040-0504  
USA

(Please add a note saying: "For Georgian Bay Forever")

.....  
This newsletter is just a snapshot of our work. For the most up-to-date information on our projects, longer versions of newsletter articles and on breaking news about Georgian Bay, please become a regular visitor to our website and Facebook page.

[GeorgianBayForever.org](http://GeorgianBayForever.org)

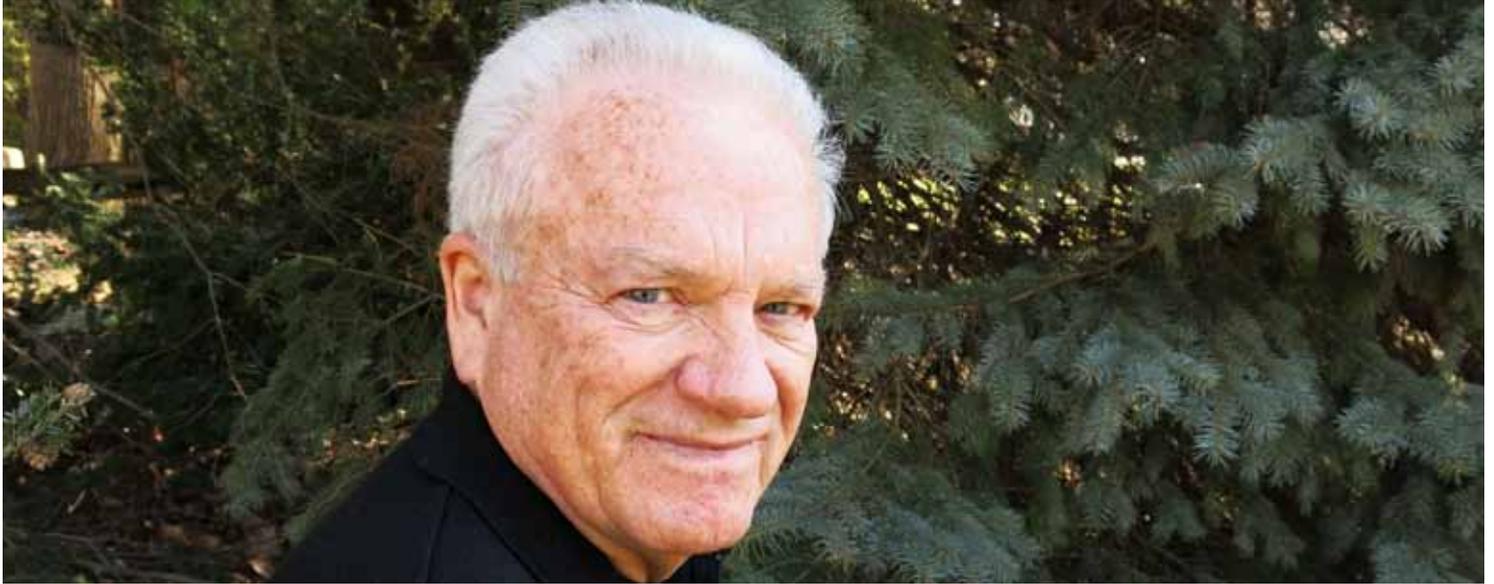
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Follow us on:



# Saying Farewell and a big welcome to our new President and Chair

By David Parkes



**I** write this with mixed feelings, as this will be my last message as president and chair of Georgian Bay Forever. I may be moving on but my love for Georgian Bay will never change.

Taking over from me is Brenda Drinkwalter. As vice chair for the past three years, she has worked tirelessly for Forever, devoting many hours to fund raising, contributing to the development of our strategic plan, as well as participating in the work of nearly every committee. She is an experienced team leader and is totally dedicated to the mission and values of Forever.

Brenda has a long history on the Great Lakes, cottaging in her early years on Michipicoten Bay on Lake Superior and now on Nottawasaga Bay near Midland for the last 25 years. Brenda is a senior consultant in the areas of business strategy, regulatory relations. She has an MBA from York University and an Honours Bachelor of Science in biochemistry from Queen's University. She is a past senior vice president of corporate affairs, Canada and Latin America Region, global privacy coordinator with IMS Health Limited; and past president of the Canadian Drug Manufacturers Association. Prior to joining CDMA she was vice president, corporate relations for Novopharm Ltd. and a pharmaceutical regulator with Health Canada.

Brenda has completed the Institute of Corporate Director Program at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto and has achieved the ICD.D certification as a corporate director. She has served on a number of for-profit and not-for-profit boards

and currently sits on the St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation board.

As I have written consistently, dealing with water levels successfully is not a short-term battle. Clearly, there are immediate pressing needs for dock and water line extensions, dredging and the like, but Forever's goal is to see that the right plan is in place to deal with the impacts of climate change on the Great Lakes.

**I write this with mixed feelings, as this will be my last message as president and chair of Georgian Bay Forever. I may be moving on but my love for Georgian Bay will never change.**

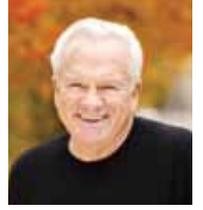
Because of the continuing devastation wrought by low water levels, we are consolidating our funds in a study of the economic impact of low water levels, for this year only. Meanwhile we have applied for grants to fund our on-going environmental projects on blue-green algae and an innovative biodiversity monitoring DNA coding tool. Our direct funding of environmental projects will resume in 2014.

As I write this, we have launched a special fund raising effort for our economic study. Initial results are very encouraging, but we need everyone's support to make this happen.

We are grateful to all of our financial supporters, to every individual donor, every patron, corporate sponsor, marina sponsor and foundation that donates to our work.

I wish to thank our board of directors, and all of the other volunteers who are investing their personal time and energy in making Forever successful.

**Please remember, all of it is for our children's children's children.**



By David Parkes

# Gathering Momentum: The economic analysis of low water levels report



**G**eorgian Bay Forever's economic analysis of low water levels is probably the most important study Georgian Bay Forever has undertaken in its 18-year history. Yes, the Baird Report on erosion and dredging in the St. Clair River, was vital to getting the attention of the International Upper Great Lakes Study Board, but an economic analysis of the quantifiable costs of low water levels is absolutely essential to getting Canada and the U.S. to implement the correct and most effective long term solution to low water levels.

Interestingly, the old adage that everything good for the environment is bad for the economy is finally giving way to more nuanced thinking. The Vital Commons: A Policy Agenda for the Great Lakes Century, [www.mowatcentre.ca/research-topic-mowat.php?mowatResearchID=39](http://www.mowatcentre.ca/research-topic-mowat.php?mowatResearchID=39) published by the Mowat Centre of the University of Toronto and the Brookings Institution, support the hypothesis that saving the environment has a better chance in a healthy economy.

Today, the Forever project is just getting underway, but already we have made significant progress with respect to its funding and who may very possibly be doing the work. At the time of this writing, we are very close to signing a contract with a major

university research institute. This will allow us to draw on expertise both here and south of the border, and from inside the institute as well as outside.

Meanwhile mayors of cities and towns around

**Georgian Bay Forever's economic analysis of low water levels is probably the most important study Georgian Bay Forever has undertaken in its 18-year history.**

the Bay have joined together to undertake an impact study of low water levels on their local economies by addressing the costs of such things as new dock construction and water line extensions for residents, and dredging and blasting channels. [www.penetanguishene.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp?NewsID=789](http://www.penetanguishene.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp?NewsID=789)

The Forever project will certainly use such information, but its main thrust will be on the shipping industry, recreational boating, marinas and resort docking facilities, agriculture, infrastructure and harbor operations, municipal and industrial water systems, hydro electric generation,

commercial and recreational fishing, and recreational properties including parks and private properties, across the entire Great Lakes.

We are very encouraged that the shipping industry, through individual companies and its industry associations, and the St. Lawrence Seaway authorities have shown serious interest in supporting our project. It will come in the form of funding, participation in scoping the study, input to the data collection, and support and assistance in providing the results of the study to governments and regulatory bodies, in both Canada and the U.S.

We also have strong indications that private foundations and individuals are prepared to step up and help fund this endeavour. And we are hopeful that other industries and associations will participate as well.

As we approach the stage of finalizing contracts, we look forward to an intense study period of about six months, with results published before year-end 2013.

**Don't forget to share your Georgian Bay moments on our Facebook and Twitter feed.**



By Penny Pepperell

# Henry's Restaurants of Georgian Bay



**W**hy would anyone run a restaurant 16 miles from the nearest road, for a 16 week season, accessible only by water and air?"

"Because this is God's country," says Paul Elliott owner along with wife Joanne of Henry's Restaurants of Georgian Bay and also a marina sponsor of Georgian Bay Forever. [www.henrysfishrestaurant.com](http://www.henrysfishrestaurant.com)

Henry's really *is* famous. It ranks as one of the best restaurants by National Geographic, which as you might expect, puts a premium on location. To locals, it's a haunt. To visitors to Sans Souci, the question is, "Where are you in relation to Henry's?"

Henry's has two sites, in Sans Souci and in Midland, and every year it serves up thousands of customers at the Boat Show in Toronto, but 80 per cent of its gross is made at its Sans Souci location between May 24th and Labour Day.

Paul's got about 20 high school and university kids waiting tables and docking boats in addition to his full-time staff at each location.

"I've had employees since I was 19 when I started my own business," says Paul. He started out as a builder in Caledon. "And now I'm a surrogate dad to all these kids who work and live at the Sans Souci location. I've heard large employers snap up kids with Henry's in their resumes. It teaches you something important. They've got to sit on their hands one minute and get in a horse race the next."

He and Joanne bought the business 17 years ago as a "retirement project". Some retirement. During the season, his day starts a five and ends close to midnight. In addition to his regular boating customers, which could be six people in a run-about, or two people in a 50-foot yacht, he could have 60 people in a commercial cruise boat showing up or alternatively cancelling at the last minute due to blowups on the Bay.

His white fish and trout are mainly from the north end of Georgian Bay, and his wall-eye is from Lake Erie, two tug-boat-loads a week in the season.

Although Henry's has a 30- to 40-foot depth at the end of its docks in Sans Souci, they have to be extended because the ramps to the shore are too steep for comfort. Fortunately, Paul's full-time staff can handle the work but he worries that his neighbours won't be able to stay in business if they can't get supplies.

"Honey Harbour is at rock bottom. Dredging is going on everywhere. But low water is also a state of mind, so I worry about what is going to happen to my customers. But no matter what, we will be here serving our guests as always, and I feel very fortunate that my family and I are able to work and live on beautiful Georgian Bay."

# A Perspective on the Evolution of the Water Levels Debate:

## An interview with David Sweetnam



**Almost from its inception, Georgian Bay Forever has been involved in the water levels issue. Over the course of those almost 18 years, the issue has evolved, some would say dramatically. What is your take of some of the seminal markers of that evolution?**

Georgian Bay Forever has a long history of leadership on the issues impacting aquatic ecosystem health in Georgian Bay. It was our

organization that got the IJC to think deeply about the implications of the dredging in the St. Clair River back in 2004, and that was a seminal event. Since then our understanding of the issues affecting our waters has expanded to include all the Great Lakes, and so our protection strategies have evolved accordingly.

At the beginning, the water level debate focused on the dredging of the St. Clair River.

Then we moved on to consider the impact of the unanticipated, unauthorized erosion that resulted from it. That likely occurred during the record high-water levels in the late 1980s, another seminal event. If that was where the story ended, we would still be pushing a St. Clair River solution, but as we know, climate change changed everything.

Three years ago, Forever came to a crossroads: stick with the St. Clair River remediation plan

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because that had always been our focus, or embrace broader system-wide solutions that were supported by the emerging scientific evidence coming out of the Upper Great Lakes Study Board. Abandoning our traditional position opened up our thinking to the very real possibilities of finding a workable solution to the problem of drying up established wetlands among other problems.

A lot of misunderstanding still exists around this issue as the latest scientific information continues to percolate through the public discourse. Folklore tales like 30-year, up-and-down cycles are hard to resist, but there is no scientific evidence to support these claims. The most likely predictions are that water levels will continue to decline but be flashier: times of intense downbursts with longer periods of drought-like conditions.

The most recent report submitted to the IJC by its Upper Great Lakes Study Board uses the word uncertainty a lot. We cannot predict with certainty what future water levels will be, but most of the models suggest a strong likelihood that water levels will continue to decline in the middle Great Lakes, and that should be enough to justify a plan to introduce resilience into the system. So the most recent seminal marker in our thinking

concerns the need for a flexible system, something that can gently move water up and down, but mostly deals with a downward trend in levels.

## **Has Forever evolved along with the water level debate?**

Georgian Bay Forever has transitioned the discussion into a language that allows us to speak to multiple stakeholders and governments. We are now steering the discussion towards finding consensus solutions, which includes a proper economic impact analysis, solutions beyond the St. Clair River and the middle Great Lakes. Our speaking to the top economic stakeholders, institutions and leaders has been very effective in moving their thinking to consideration of some proven technologies.

## **What do we know now about the water levels issue that we didn't know 10 years ago?**

We know that the so-called St. Clair River solution cannot address the issues faced throughout the Great Lakes. We know that climate change is now the driving force in changing water levels. We know that changing water levels means changed

coastal wetlands. Some disappear and some emerge. The net change is unknown but many local fishing holes are more prolific now than they were 40 years ago. And we know that with intervention, the entire system can gain some resilience, with healthy seasonal fluctuations in water levels to ensure biodiversity.

## **Within the parameters of its mandate, the Study Board studied a great number of the multi-lake regulation options. Which is the best?**

The Niagara 3-point plan stands out as the most promising in terms of delivering benefits to the entire Great Lakes system, providing the necessary up and down flexibility and value for money. It would eliminate the expected water level extremes and raise the water level in Lake Erie but keep it within its historical extremes and allow for seasonal fluctuations. This would slow the flow coming into Lake Erie from the Detroit River and upstream of that, Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River. This in turn would raise water levels in Lake Michigan-Huron. And the Niagara River does not present the same environmental hazards that the St. Clair River does with its Lake Sturgeon spawning beds.

# SUPPORT OUR ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF LOW WATER LEVELS

Donate online at  
[georgianbayforever.org](http://georgianbayforever.org)

# A Paddle Board Odyssey in Support of Georgian Bay

Vincent Beretta and a couple of his friends will be paddle boarding from George Island Killarney to Henry's Famous Fish Restaurant in Sans Souci to bring public attention to the plight of Georgian Bay in these low-water times. The guys intend to carry all their gear with them, strapped down on their boards, and to camp out on the islands and not touch mainland until their odyssey is over, about 280 kilometres later.

If anyone has the stamina and athletic skill needed to withstand the swell and the winds of this journey, it's probably Vincent. He is a former 1988 National Triathlon Series Champion and 1990 Commonwealth Games participant. He is lining up his team now and angling for some possible celebrity appearances, to join him for parts of the journey.

"Since I started cottaging on Sandy Island, I have become keenly aware of the threats facing this beautiful piece of the world: the wetlands, nurseries for the fish, the impact on birds and water life, the threat to water quality and what's happening to life on the Bay when people can't get to their cottages and the local communities are taking such a big hit."

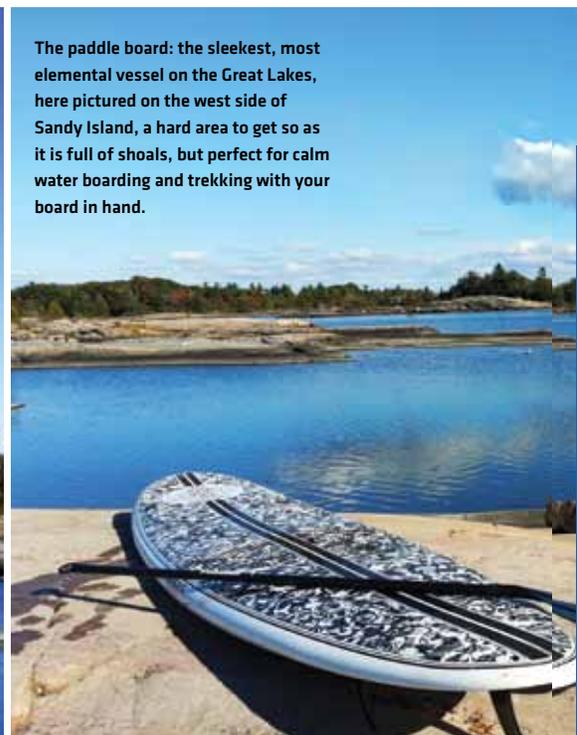
Vincent invites boarders, kayakers, canoeists and other boats to join his team as they pass by their local communities. A communications coordinator will be arranging events at marinas and town docks to raise awareness about Georgian Bay and money for Georgian Bay Forever. They're due to start July 27th.

The paddlers will capture their adventures on video with additional photography provided by a support vessel. They'll stay in touch via their smart phones, which will be charged like all their electrical equipment on solar panels mounted on their boards. The end result should be an engaging documentary film about the impact on the ecosystem of low water levels as seen from the wild side of Georgian Bay.

This will be the perfect event to follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, And Forever will be staying right on top of it. Sponsorship opportunities abound.

**To find out more contact  
vincent.beretta@walkway.ca  
and follow Vincent's board adventures  
on Forever's Facebook page and Twitter.**

Vincent Beretta will be travelling from Killarney to Sans Souci by paddle board this summer to raise money for Georgian Bay Forever.



The paddle board: the sleekest, most elemental vessel on the Great Lakes, here pictured on the west side of Sandy Island, a hard area to get so as it is full of shoals, but perfect for calm water boarding and trekking with your board in hand.

# Take a Bow Georgian Bay! The IJC Recommendations on Water Levels

**F**inally, the IJC is paying attention, acknowledging the grave injustice that was done to the middle Great Lakes as a result of the dredging and subsequent erosion in the St. Clair River. And we, the Georgian Bay community, made it happen! Georgian Bay Forever raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support research on this issue. We wrote briefs, press releases, took interviews, conducted tours. Meanwhile, the community at large wrote hundreds, maybe thousands of letters, signed petitions, and showed up at meetings.

When this all started, Georgian Bay was the forgotten Great Lake. Now it's the most complex fresh water ecosystem in the world, because we raised many thousands of dollars for a wetland inventory, proving we have the most numerous and pristine in the Great Lakes.

Again, with hard-earned donor dollars, Forever got the northeastern shore of Georgian Bay declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to establish its international importance.

As recently as last summer, we were staring at the IJC's Upper Great Lakes Study Board's do-nothing final report and now we are looking at real change. The IJC's current report to the Canadian and U.S. governments recommends that they consider structures in the St. Clair

River to restore water levels in Lake Michigan-Huron, raising them by some five to 10 inches over a ten-year period. That's huge. [http://ijc.org/en\\_/news?news\\_id=108](http://ijc.org/en_/news?news_id=108)

When this all started, Georgian Bay was the forgotten Great Lake. Now it's the most complex fresh water ecosystem in the world.

But now after quaffing that champagne, let's take a hard look at what the IJC has proposed, because we don't want to get stuck in a box, inside parameters that aren't going to help us get to the right solution.

**First:** A regulatory structure in the St. Clair River is unlikely to address adequately the needs of any body of water downstream. The Study Board has opened people's eyes to the need for a system-wide approach.

**Second:** The Upper Great Lakes Study Board identified that the St. Clair River has some challenges as a site for regulatory structures. It's relatively shallow and hosts regionally significant, lake sturgeon spawning beds that are protected in law.

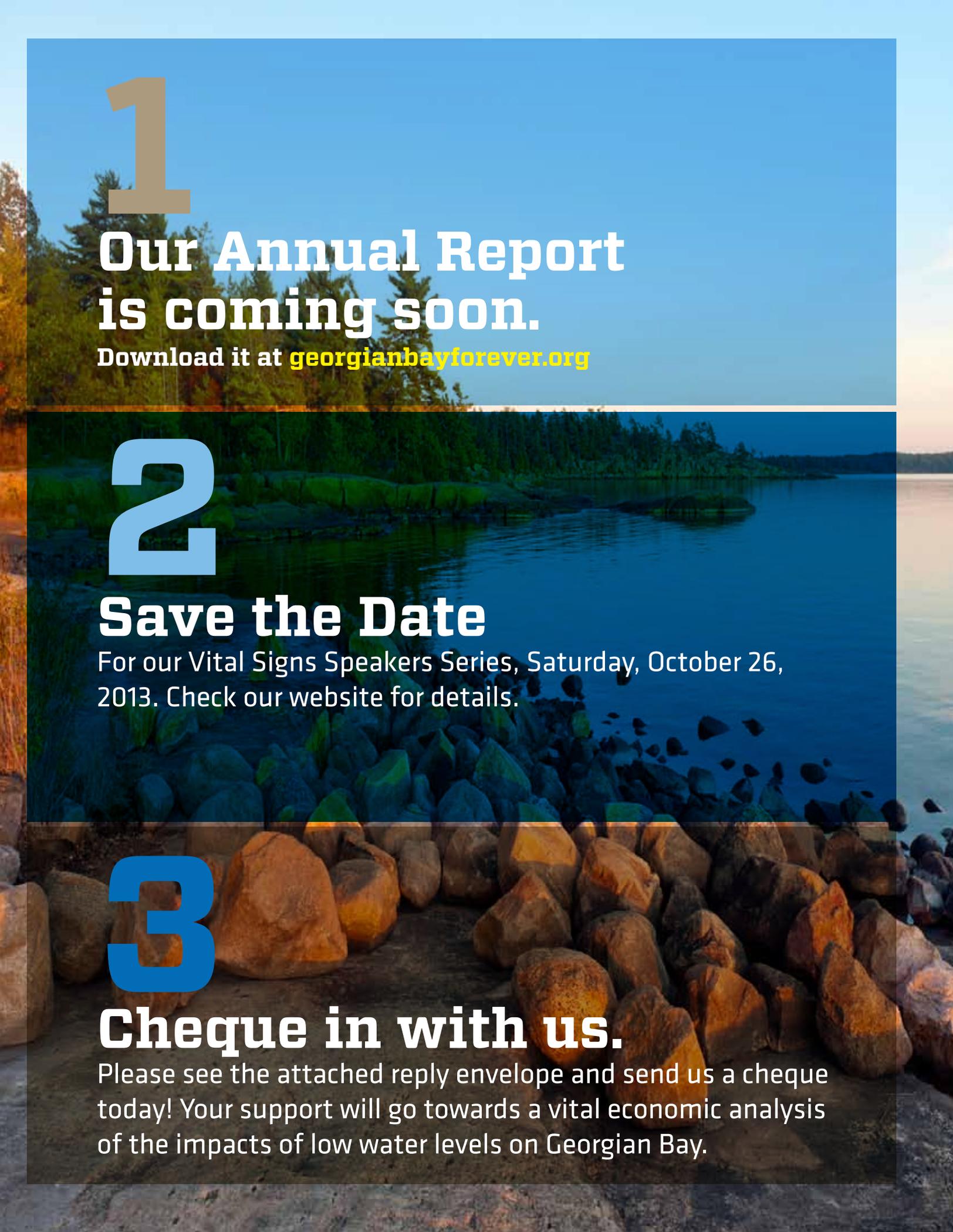
**Third:** Five to 10 inches? These numbers are exactly equivalent to the Report's calculations of the water level drops directly attributable to the dredging and its aftermath. They aren't necessarily scientifically appropriate. As the IJC has acknowledged, the dredging damage is mostly in the past. The new challenge is climate change.

Obviously, the U.S. Sectional Chair, Lana Pollack had grave doubts about the IJC's recommendations because she declined to sign the Report. In her view, "the Advice may raise false hope that structures in the St. Clair River, if built, would be sufficient to resolve the suffering from low water levels of Lake Michigan-Huron, while at the same time causing possible disruption downstream in Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie."

Our next step should be to address the impact of climate change and to consider a system-wide approach. The Study Board and the IJC pointed the way but they didn't finish the job.

**IN ADDITION TO OUR PATRONS AND OUR MARINA SPONSORS  
GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER IS PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL FOR  
THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR CORPORATE DONORS.**





# 1

## **Our Annual Report is coming soon.**

Download it at [georgianbayforever.org](http://georgianbayforever.org)

# 2

## **Save the Date**

For our Vital Signs Speakers Series, Saturday, October 26, 2013. Check our website for details.

# 3

## **Cheque in with us.**

Please see the attached reply envelope and send us a cheque today! Your support will go towards a vital economic analysis of the impacts of low water levels on Georgian Bay.



**THESE MARINAS STEPPED UP  
TO HELP PROTECT THE BAY.  
IS YOURS ONE OF THEM?**



**GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER THANKS THE ABOVE MARINAS FOR THEIR STEADFAST SUPPORT OF OUR WATERKEEPERS' BOAT FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. WITHOUT THEIR HELP, WE WOULDN'T STAY AFLOAT!**

"THE BAYKEEPER" INDICATES THAT GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER IS A MEMBER OF THE WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE, A GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF ON-THE-WATER ADVOCATES WHO PATROL AND PROTECT OVER 100,000 MILES OF RIVERS, STREAMS AND COASTLINES IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA, EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, ASIA AND AFRICA. FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WATERKEEPER.ORG

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO STAY IN TOUCH VIA EMAIL? SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO  
EXECUTIVEDIRECTOR@GEORGIANBAYFOREVER.ORG**

# THANKS DAVID

FOR NURTURING OUR NEW GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER BRAND

FOR JUMP STARTING OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING EXERCISE

FOR KEEPING US FOCUSED ON OUR FOUR PILLARS:

1. WATER LEVELS 2. WATER QUALITY

3. WETLANDS 4. INVASIVE SPECIES

FOR SUPPORTING OUR SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

FOR STARTING UP OUR PATRONS' CIRCLE,

THE CORPORATE DONOR GROUP,

THE MARINA SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM,

AND OUR PLANNED GIVING

AND BEQUEST INITIATIVES

FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF

FINANCIAL SURPLUSES

FOR BROADENING THE GEOGRAPHIC

AND FUNCTIONAL BASE OF

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FOR ACQUIRING OUR BAYKEEPER BOAT,

WHICH WE USE FOR SHEPHERDING OUR

SCIENTIFIC TEAM AROUND THE BAY.

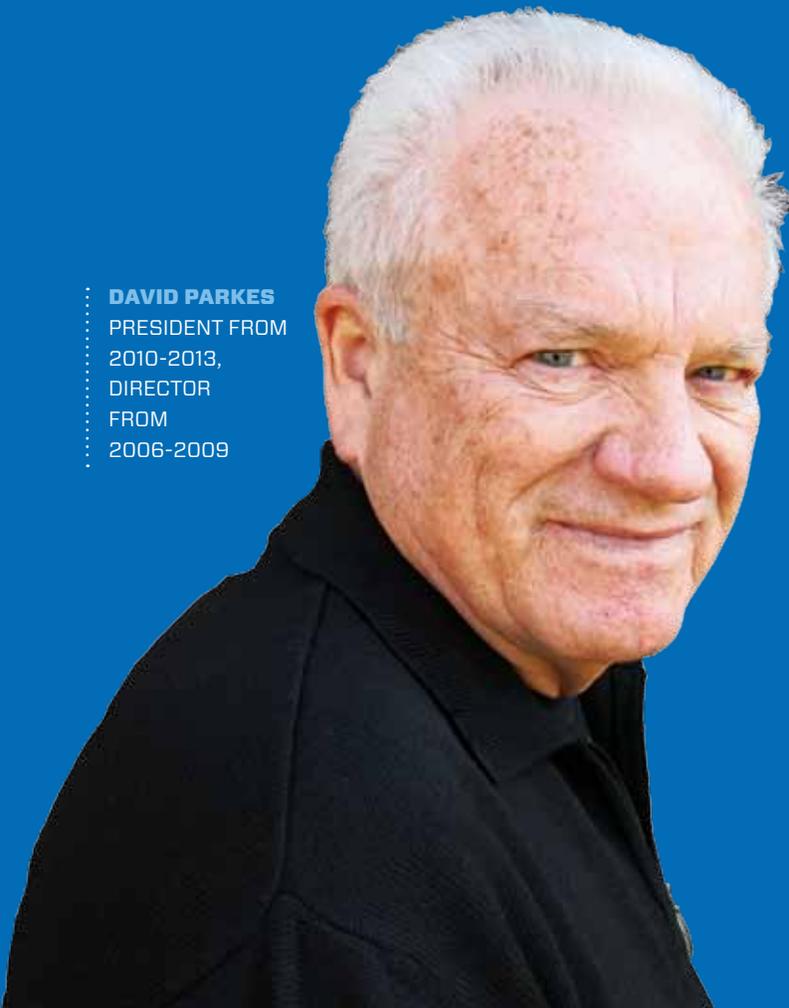
FOR LAUNCHING OUR ECONOMIC

ANALYSIS OF LOW WATER LEVELS

FOR FOUR WONDERFUL

YEARS OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

DAVID PARKES  
PRESIDENT FROM  
2010-2013,  
DIRECTOR  
FROM  
2006-2009



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