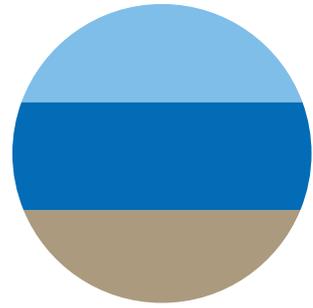


GEORGIAN BAY FOREVER



SPRING 2013
VOL. 4, ISSUE 4

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



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SPRING 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 (#895311066 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.

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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")

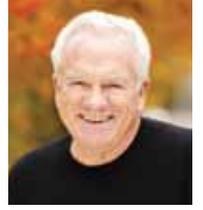
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This newsletter is just a snapshot of our work. For the most up-to-date information on our projects, longer versions of newsletter articles and on breaking news about Georgian Bay, please become a regular visitor to our website.

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By David Parkes

Something Big: an economic analysis of the impact of low water levels



It's coming down to the crunch. Years and years spent slogging away at the water levels issue is coming to the point where we're talking to the decision-makers, not just the Upper Great Lakes Study Board, not just the International Joint Commission, but also the federal government. And with that, has come a need for an entirely new approach, because we have to talk to the feds in their own language, and that has to do with the economic impact of low water levels, as well as the environmental impact.

As water levels have sunk to new lows, the world is really paying attention. Across the Internet, in such venerable publications as the London-based Economist, in all types of media both staid and not, the alarm bells are ringing because the numbers (led by the shipping industry, which has handy ways of quantifying things) are starting to add up.

When the Study Board left off looking at what could be done in the St. Clair River and took up an examination of multi-lake regulation, it really abandoned the idea that our water levels problem could be solved by anything short of managing all the water in all the Great Lakes. This change in approach takes into account the livelihood of all the 45 million people who drink the water and make their living in the Great Lakes region.

But for governments to act they need data. They have to be able to quantify the consequences of doing nothing. And so Georgian

Bay Forever has taken up the challenge of commissioning an initial economic analysis to quantify the economic consequences of low water levels.

When you think about it, this is not a stretch for us. We are in the business of public education and scientific research on everything to do with water levels, water quality, invasive species and wetlands on the Bay. An economic analysis that demonstrates the need for long-

term comprehensive solutions to the water levels crisis will have a direct impact on the health of the aquatic ecosystem. And right now an economic analysis is the tool we need to talk to our federal government.

Georgian Bay Forever has two major projects to its credit that have taken hundreds of thousands of dollars and many years to reach fruition: The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, which established the international importance of the Georgian Bay ecosystem; and the Baird Report that described the role of dredging and erosion in the St. Clair River to Georgian Bay's water level problem. And now we're adding a third.

It's absolutely the right time to consider the economic consequences of low levels. Our board of directors is enthusiastically behind this and we hope you, our donors and readers, will be too.

“It's absolutely the right time to consider the economic consequences of water levels.”

Please visit our Facebook page and website to stay up to date with how we are tackling this problem. We need your support and so does Georgian Bay.



By Penny Pepperell

Some Cold Hard Facts about the Costs of Low Water Levels

Low water levels are taking a big chunk out of the economy, in Georgian Bay and everywhere else around the Great Lakes but no one has pulled together a solid document that can demonstrate exactly how much money is draining away along with all that water. So Georgian Bay Forever has decided to take this on. For further thoughts on the rationale behind this, please read "Something Big" on page 3.

An economic analysis is important because governments are loath to commit cold, hard taxpayer dollars (especially when the economy is enduring a precarious recovery) based on hand wringing and anecdotes.

But before turning the job over to the professional economists, Forever is pulling some numbers together, to identify the vulnerabilities, who and what sectors are going to have pay a steep price for crashing water levels. Here's what we know now.

First up is shipping. Commerce on the Great Lakes accounts for nearly 227,000 U.S. and Canadian jobs. In 2010, wage and salary income in this sector generated \$14.5 billion in total wage and salary income, resulting in \$4.7 billion in federal, state and provincial and municipal tax revenue.

Low water levels force shippers to lighten loads. One domestic shipper calculates a 12-inch drop below chart datum equates to \$14 million in foregone tonnage. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) calculates water levels will drop at least 21 inches below chart datum this year.

Agriculture is going to be hit in Southern Ontario, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. The Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation in Ontario predicts a decline of up to 12 per cent in precipitation over the next 40 years. That will mean bigger draws on ground water, which is tied in a myriad of

Low water levels can damage water intake systems, contaminate water supplies with sediment, increase operational and maintenance requirements, not to mention impact water quality.

ways into the Great Lakes. (The relationship between the two is a highly complex hydrological puzzle that no one quite has a handle on.)

Infrastructure and harbour operations: there are 160 miles of breakwaters around the Great Lakes, 30 per cent of which are of timber construction. These deteriorate when exposed to the air, resulting in replacement costs of tens of millions of dollars, perhaps billions. Indiana recently spent over \$10 million to repair a single pier.

U.S.A.C.E. has allocated \$200 million for dredging to restore channels to their intended depths, and that's just for the official navigational channels, not the channels and waterways necessary for marinas and local water-accessed residences.

The Great Lakes provides water for 43 million people. Low water levels can damage

water intake systems, contaminate water supplies with sediment, increase operational and maintenance requirements, not to mention impact water quality.

In Ontario, 80 per cent of hydro-electrical generation comes from Great Lakes water. Low water levels can force stations to operate below capacity thereby reducing revenues.

Ontario's commercial fishery contributed \$234 million to the provincial economy in 2011. Low water levels could have a devastating impact on the health of the fishery by impacting wetlands and spawning beds, but it could also force fishermen to reduce their draft by shrinking their nets thus raising their costs per fish caught.

Seventy-three million Ontario tourists dropped \$12.3 billion into the Great Lakes region in 2010. There are 10,000 cottages along the northeastern shores of Georgian Bay that contribute over \$100 million every year to their local economies. These recreational dollars are highly dependent upon the pristine character of the coastal areas. Seasonal visitors might decide to go elsewhere if their waterfront becomes plugged up with invasive weeds or they literally can't get to their destinations because their channels have turned into mud flats or rocky terrains.

This is just a taste of the some of the documentation Georgian Bay Forever is pulling together in an effort to enlist the support of the federal government in the cause of restoring Georgian Bay water to healthier levels.



Chris Pfaff: A Thunder Beach Childhood

By Penny Pepperell

Courtesy of Thunder Beach Association. Photo credit: Paul McNamara



Pristine Beaches, long stretches of sand, shallow, child-friendly water: this is not how many of us think of Georgian Bay. We've adopted the spare, striped rocks and bent pine trees as our iconic images, (with a little help from the Group of Seven and Tom Thomson) without thinking too much about it, but Georgian Bay offers so much more than that.

Thunder Beach, to name just one community, is an old-style cottage community where digging trenches in the sand and building a moat around a sand castle took up a whole morning; where gangs of children spent almost the entire day in the water and ended it with roasted marshmallows on a stick in front of a bonfire in the sand. This is a magical picture of a perfect Ontario childhood, especially in the '50s and '60s before moms went to work and life got more circumscribed.

Chris Pfaff, CEO of Pfaff Auto and a patron of Georgian Bay Forever had such a childhood growing up in Thunder Beach after his

parents bought a cottage there in 1959. His memories of that time form the basis for his deep passion for the Bay now.

Established in 1964 by his father, Pfaff Auto, or "Pfaff Find your Drive" was recognized by Deloitte as one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies in 2010. The company offers a full range of automotive services: leasing of all makes and models of cars but specializing in luxury automobiles and an alternative to traditional vehicle financing; vehicle customization with performance enhancements, body kits, wheels, exhaust and accessories; and a dealer-owned auto body repair operation under full control of the Pfaff experts. Pfaff features Porsche, Audi, McLaren, Volkswagen and Toyota at 10 locations in Woodbridge, London, Newmarket, Vaughan, Orangeville and Vancouver.

Chris's love of cars has spilled over to a love of driving his 20-foot Regal to Penetang, Honey Harbour and Christian Island. Once or twice a summer he jet skis to Henry's Famous Fish Restaurant in Sans Souci, the highlight of his season.

In 2004, he built his own winterized cottage at Cedar Point. And although he is unable to get away from his thriving business in the off seasons, his brother and his family are there enjoying cozy Thanksgiving dinners and May 24th opening up weekends.

The drop in water levels is inescapable and dramatic even to those whose properties border splendid beaches. "I remember the water levels going up and down, but never staying down so low," says Chris. "I never remember it being anything like this."

Fortunately for Georgian Bay Forever, Chris is engaged with the water levels issue by providing long-term funding through the charity's patron program. And he represents an important constituency of supporters, those who enjoy the other Georgian Bay of long stretches of white sand.

But one thing we all have in common: an attachment to the water. It can't be said enough, this is a very special place. Georgian Bay Forever is glad to have him on board.

Social Media: The number one best way to follow the water levels issue

Starting last November, Georgian Bay Forever made a big push on Facebook and Twitter, with more than a little help from our social media committee headed by Madeleine White of McGregor Bay and ably assisted by Carolyn Singer. Prior to the launch I suspected this online stuff was tedious and vacuous when it wasn't libelous and terrifying. But under the tutelage of Maddie who approached the matter of raising Forever's profile in a highly professional manner, the results have been nothing short of outstanding as documented by Facebook's metrics. We're now reaching about 2,000 people: not bad for four winter months with Christmas wedged in the middle.

Our Facebook page is about news and conversation. You'll be pointed to scientific articles, video clips from cable shows, pho-

tos of stranded docks, readers' comments and lots of excellent commentary from other concerned-about-water groups from all over the Great Lakes.

You'll find out where to get the latest satellite pictures of conditions on the Great Lakes for example; how ice cover impacts water temperature; what shippers are saying about shipping; the latest on beach bird kills; how the municipalities are handling the dredging and blasting crisis and everything, everything to do with the IJC's recommendations.

Facebook is the ideal medium for covering the water levels issue. It taps into the vast amorphous grassroots movement around the rim of the Lakes but importantly keeps us in touch with the scientists studying the subtle ways in which climate is altering our environment—and meanwhile, we're

providing them with a fan base. While the web is great for scanning the information horizon, it is also the better-than-print forum for long thoughtful articles.

Facebook is giving Forever a presence with a younger cohort than is represented by cottage owners. Our largest demographic: women between 15 to 24; second up are women between 45 and 54, but we also have a respectable showing at 10.3 per cent from the younger 25 to 34 set, roughly the same percentage as the 55 to 64 age group.

So don't be afraid, you won't be bored, but do make a habit of checking in on Georgian Bay Forever's Facebook page to see what going on. And once you're used to Facebook, you can take on the real ephemera, Twitter!

Find us on Twitter @gbayforever and on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/TYXs5o>



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





**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 PREFER TO STAY IN TOUCH VIA EMAIL? OR MAYBE YOU WOULD LIKE SNAIL MAIL AND AN EMAILED NEWSLETTER? PLEASE SEND YOUR ADDRESS TO EXECUTIVEDIRECTOR@GEORGIANBAYFOREVER.ORG

WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

PAUL BOWEN, geotechnical engineer and hydro-geologist and a member of our science advisory committee

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TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BAY, for its support regarding water quality testing

TOWNSHIP OF THE ARCHIPELAGO for its support of our the blue-green algae research

BILL AND LINDA WATTS, for hosting our summer research team

MADELEINE WHITE, for chairing the social media committee and her photography

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JOIN THE TEAM THAT IS DOING SO MUCH TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF GEORGIAN BAY WATER LEVELS.

CONTACT DAVID SWEETNAM TO DISCUSS JOINING THE FOREVER TEAM AT 905.880.4945 OR DAVID.SWEETNAM@GEORGIANBAYFOREVER.ORG

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