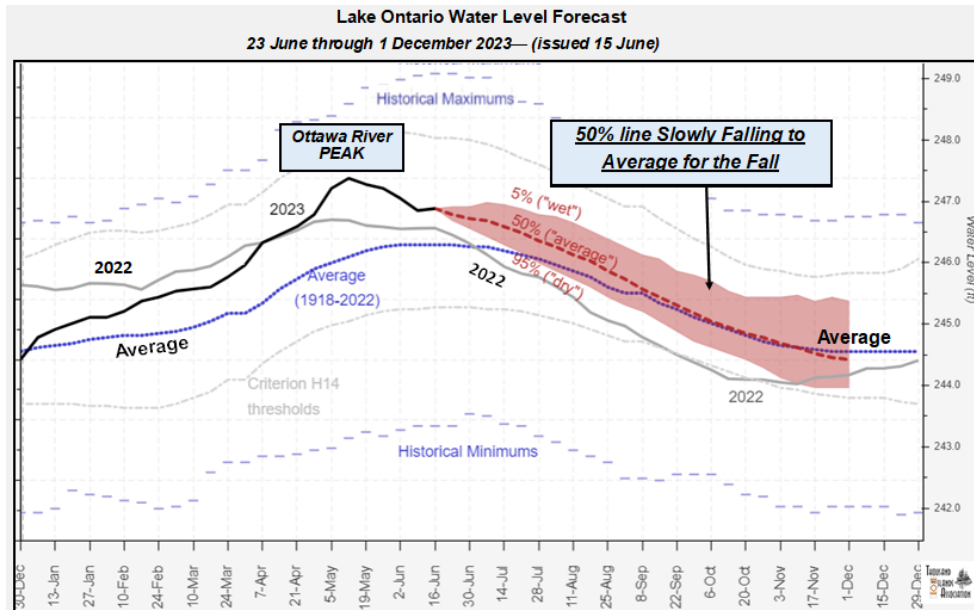


## Water Levels – Have Already Peaked – Remaining Above Average Until November

TIA Water Levels Committee (6/21/23) – by Barton, Stewart & White



<https://ijc.org/en/loslrb/watershed/forecasts> Edits by TIA

**Water levels are looking pretty good this year! Barring a massive drought, we will not see low levels as we saw at the end of last summer & fall.**

**Levels** at this time of year for 2023 are **higher** than they were last year, but **outflows are lower**. This is to our benefit...Why?

It's the "**52-week lookback**" from Plan 2014. "*This indicator is a component of the regulation plan that takes into account the previous 52 weeks of precipitation in its formula to determine outflows...to ensure that past conditions are weighed (as well as looking at present conditions)*" Last year this "feature" drove levels too low!

**Fact:** The recent 52 weeks were **drier** than the 52 weeks leading up to this time in 2022. The end result? *Levels will drop more slowly this year than last year, all else being equal.* This "feature" is a target for improvement in the Plan 2014 GLAM review.

The "**blip**" up in levels on **June 12th/13th of 3 cm** was caused primarily by 2.97 cm of **rain** received by the Lake Ontario Basin on June 12th. How much water is 2.97 cm across the entire Lake Ontario basin? That's the equivalent of 760,617 Olympic size swimming pools (2 meters deep). It's equal to the total amount of water that will flow through the Moses Saunders power dam over 2.57 days (at the current outflow rate of 8,580 m<sup>3</sup>/s). **That's a lotta watt!**

**Were YOU impacted by high or low water levels?** The International Joint Committee (IJC) is now **seeking public input** on how water levels impact you! Have your say, TIA!  
2022 water levels survey: [2022 Water Level Impacts Questionnaire Survey](#)  
2023 water level survey: [2023 Water Level Impacts Questionnaire Survey](#)

Read on for an update from PAG member Ross Stewart, TIA Member-at-Large!

## A (Very) Brief Introduction to the PAG

**Question:** Did you ever wonder how the current regulation plan governing water levels in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River is evaluated and monitored on an ongoing basis?

**Answer:** **GLAM** (Great Lakes Adaptive Management) and the **PAG** (Public Advisory Group)

### Background

The current regulation plan, **Plan 2014**, consists of technical rules on water releases at the Moses-Saunders Power Dam on the St. Lawrence River and operational criteria regulating these outflows. It replaced the older regulation plan (Plan 1958DD) on January 1, 2017. As part of Plan 2014, the International Joint Commission (IJC) established **GLAM** to undertake the required monitoring, modelling and assessment related to the ongoing evaluation of regulation plans, including their impacts and effectiveness.

**Expedited Review of Plan 2014** – Given the high-water levels and flooding experienced in 2017 and 2019, the IJC accelerated the established adaptive management process burnt into the plan, and an expedited review was ordered to be undertaken by GLAM. It consists of two phases:

- *Phase 1*- short term - focused on providing information as quickly as possible to help the Board with nearterm deviation decisions during high water level events; (development of decision support tools)

*Status: complete with ongoing improvements*

- *Phase 2* will continue the work of Phase 1 looking for possible improvements in how the plan addresses extreme highs and lows under many different scenarios and over the longer-term

*Status: work just underway – completion spring 2025*

### So what is PAG then?

A Public Advisory Group that consists of 8 members from the US and 8 members from Canada. This group provides direction and guidance from representative members of the public that represent a geographically broad range of interests such as shoreline riparians, commercial interests (marinas), boating/recreation, tourism, etc

### What is the purpose of PAG?

The PAG will inform the GLAM Committee and ILOSLR (the Board) on:

- decision factors the GLAM Committee can suggest to the ILOSLRB for their use in making decisions on water outflow changes;

- methodologies used to assess regulation plans and how they are communicated to interests; including, timing, and frequency for public engagement;
- bring information from their respective sectors and communities (**ie. TIA**) back to the PAG, and compile and coordinate feedback from their organization/group/network in a timely manner;
- Assist the GLAM Committee and the Board in engaging with key groups and communities impacted by water level and flow conditions related to the expedited review, the evaluation of the regulation plan and the adaptive management process

#### **How can you provide input?**

- Keep informed...have your say and voice your views!
- TIA will seek input from its membership from time to time. Continue to read **TIA's River Talk**, for information and status updates. And as always please reach out to TIA if you have any questions or concerns.

**A reminder to fill out shoreline user impact survey for [2022](#) (low water) and [2023](#) (high spring water)**

**For more information on the Great Lakes Adaptive Management committee, please click [here](#)**