

OONA ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER, December, 2025

Fellow OONA members: Here is our latest environmentally focused newsletter. It is being emailed to members and sponsors, and also published on the members-only OONA Facebook site. In this edition, we take on these topics:

1. Current and short-term-future Lake Ontario water levels
2. STAMP/ Data Center update
3. The ecological health of the Oak Orchard River
4. Your electric bill

Comments, suggestions, questions, corrections, and constructive criticism are always welcome. Thanks for reading. Dave G and Frank P (*The OONA Environment and Preservation Committee*)

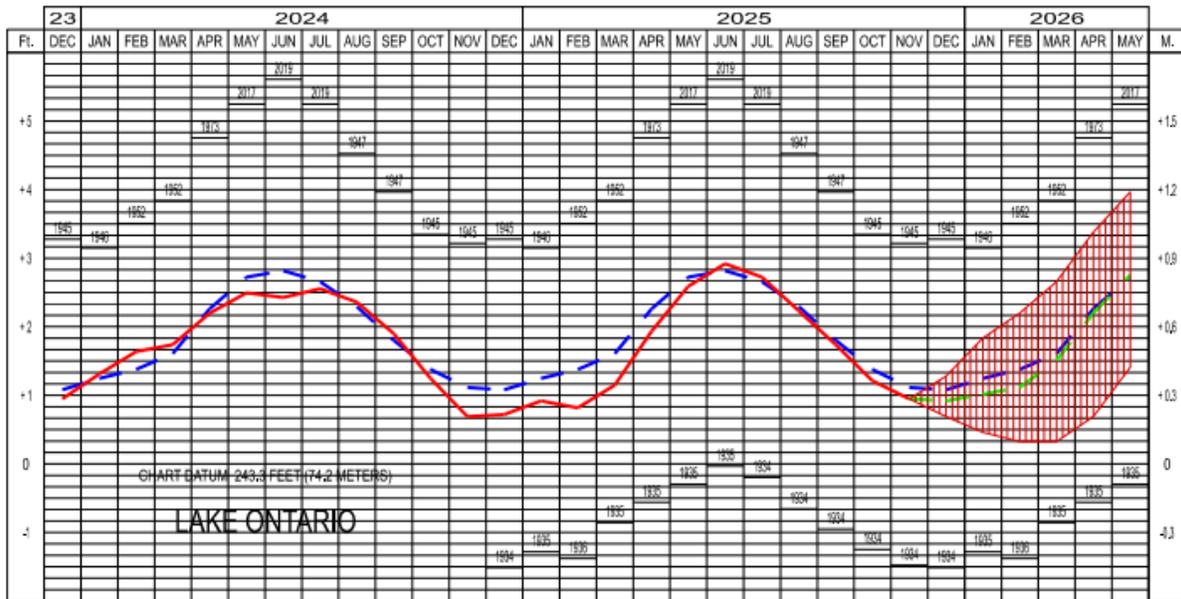
I. LAKE ONTARIO WATER LEVELS

“Prediction is difficult, especially about the future.” Niels Bohr



From the Army Corps of Engineers website.

- The vertical axis represents the lake level deviation from a standard depth, represented by “0” on the axis. Note that the standard “0” level is an arbitrary figure, and NOT the long-term average lake level.
- The black (sine wave) entries at the top and bottom of the chart are the highest and lowest lake levels ever recorded for that particular month.
- The blue dashed lines are the long-term average levels.
- The red continuous line is the actual measured level for the year and month.
- The green dashed line is the predicted future lake level
- The red hashed areas represent a range of possible deviations from the predicted levels. That is, it is likely that the actual levels will fall somewhere within the red hashed region.



So the prediction is that we will not approach the catastrophic flooding levels of 2017 and 2019.

Great Lakes Basin Hydrology November 2025

Preliminary estimates indicate that precipitation during November was generally below average for the Great Lakes Basin overall. The Superior basin received near average precipitation, the basins of Lakes Michigan-Huron and Erie received below average precipitation, and the Ontario basin received above average precipitation. Over the past 12 months, cumulative precipitation has been near average for all basins, ranging from 97% to 102% of average. Provisional water supplies for November indicate that the basins were very dry throughout the month. In fact, Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron historically average a positive water supply for the month of November, but water supplies last month were well below zero. Across all lakes, net basin supply (NBS) was significantly below average. The November outflows were close to average for Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, and Erie, while outflow from Lake Ontario was slightly below average.

From October to November, water levels for Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, Erie, and Ontario declined by 3, 5, 6, 5, and 3 inches, respectively. November monthly mean water levels on all lakes were below their long-term average levels. This was the first time in over 10 years that the Lake Erie monthly mean level was below average. The updated 6-month Great Lakes water level forecast predicts that all the lakes will likely continue their seasonal declines over the next month, except Lake Ontario, which is likely to remain near its November monthly mean level in December.

PRECIPITATION (INCHES)								
BASIN	November				12-Month Comparison			
	2025	Average (1900-2023)	Diff.	% of Average	Last 12 months	Average (1900-2023)	Diff.	% of Average
Superior	2.56	2.52	0.04	102	31.28	30.71	0.57	102
Michigan-Huron	1.76	2.80	-1.04	63	31.99	33.03	-1.04	97
Erie	2.24	2.87	-0.63	78	35.56	36.02	-0.46	99
Ontario	3.75	3.19	0.56	118	36.49	36.50	-0.01	100
Great Lakes	2.24	2.76	-0.52	81	32.71	33.15	-0.44	99

Lake	November WATER SUPPLIES ¹ (cfs)		November OUTFLOW ² (cfs)	
	2025	Average (1900-2020)	2025	Average (1900-2020)
Superior	-35,000	17,000	82,000	79,000
Michigan-Huron	-65,000	40,000	190,000	191,000
Erie	-35,000	-2,000	203,000	203,000
Ontario	7,000	22,000	231,000	242,000

Notes: Values (excluding averages) are based on preliminary computations; cfs denotes cubic feet per second.

¹ Net basin supply is the net result of precipitation falling on the lake, runoff from precipitation falling on the land which flows to the lake, and evaporation from the lake. Negative net basin supply denotes evaporation exceeded runoff and precipitation. The net total supply can be found by adding the net basin supply and the outflow from the upstream lake.

² Does not include diversions.

II. STAMP / DATA CENTER UPDATE

Lawsuit Dropped!!! yay???



The lawsuit brought by the Sierra Club and the TSN against the GCEDC and the Town of Alabama was dropped by the plaintiffs, after STREAM Data Centers (recently acquired by the private equity fund Apollo Funds) withdrew its plans for a data center at STAMP, and (independently) the GCEDC cancelled all the relevant permits for building the data center. Sounds great, right? However, STREAM said that they will submit plans for an even larger data center at STAMP! Whether this is serious or just sour grapes is not known. Likewise, how the GCEDC would react to a hypothetical new submission is not known.

Meanwhile, Plug Power, the hydrogen / fuel cell company that has not turned a profit since its inception in the late 90's, and has suspended construction at STAMP in 2023, stated that they will not pursue further work at STAMP, but instead will attempt to sell their (low cost) electricity rights (presumably at STAMP) to raise badly needed cash. Selling the rights granted to them by NYPA (rather than forfeiting them back to NYPA) appears to be illegal. At least that's what NYPA stated.

As of this writing, the total number of permanent jobs at STAMP is zero.

How this turns out is anybody's guess, but it sure looks like a mess. Let's do our best to make sure the mess doesn't come floating down the river through our neighborhood.

III. Ecological Health of the Oak Orchard River



We are trying hard, so far without success, to get our hands on recent data on the health of the river. The latest official data was published in 2005, based on work done between 1997 and 1999. Some more recent results were published in 2017 (data gathered in 2015). So everything is really out of date. These data indicated that the river was quite impaired, with phosphorus probably the biggest contaminant. Fortunately, there is currently a joint effort between Orleans and Genesee counties to get an updated assessment of the health of the watershed. We are scheduled to speak in December with the people in charge of this assessment. Frankly, we are worried that the results of the study will not be published until 2028, and thus may be too late to affect a decision on, say, the STAMP wastewater plans. We will keep you informed on this important topic.

IV. Your Electric Bill: Some potentially useful links (from DJG)



Okay, first a caveat - I might be wrong here. A whole bunch has been written about the causes of skyrocketing electric bills, and I'm not qualified to give an expert opinion on it, so I will give you my own biased non-expert opinion, which is: There's a terrible mismatch between supply and demand. And things like data centers and "green" mandates add a whole bunch to the demand side. Also, green mandates affecting power generation options (in pursuit of the very legitimate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions) can reduce the supply side. Not a good situation.

Below are some relevant links. Let me know if any of the links don't work!

- A local perspective, compliments of Ken DeRoller
<https://www.thebatavian.com/press-release/assemblyman-hawley-responds-to-report-on-new-york-energy-costs/645746>
- Here's one take on it from the AP, which I believe to be a fairly unbiased source.
<https://apnews.com/article/electricity-prices-data-centers-artificial-intelligence-fbf213a915fb574a4f3e5baaa7041c3ahttps://apnews.com/article/electricity-prices-data-centers-artificial-intelligence-fbf213a915fb574a4f3e5baaa7041c3a>
- From Bloomberg: So you want an AI Boom?
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2025-12-04/how-trump-s-renewables-roadblocks-can-stall-the-ai-boom>
- Here's an article from Inside Climate News. a source that I follow::
https://insideclimatenews.org/news/15062025/former-utility-exec-mark-ellis-talks-electricity-bills-energy-transition/?utm_source=InsideClimate+News&utm_campaign=9972b6d9e9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2025_06_21_01_10&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_29c928ffb5-9972b6d9e9-330544874
- From NPR:
<https://www.npr.org/2025/08/16/nx-s1-5502671/electricity-bill-high-inflation-ai>
- Cyberguy reports on a Purdue study:
<https://cyberguy.com/news/us-power-grid-handle-full-electrification/>
- Options for lowering costs, from The Atlantic:
https://www.theatlantic.com/science/2025/12/electricity-costs-climate/685123/?gift=bY_QuBCy0wCJBekYFo0cb3gbmJKABVZOP0JfIRtCKLQ&utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=share

- From the New York Times:

https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/30/climate/electricity-prices.html?unlocked_article_code=1.6k8.ECCE.kJLxWUZI8ujZ&smid=url-share

- Finally, here's a chart I copied from a Bloomberg article about new sources of electricity in the USA over the next decade or so:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WqR9PNyfYVg6qbUMVnFOmaifPFPyo_JW_akylKHlrWE/edit?usp=sharing

There's a lot of information on the internet. I urge you to search, but keep a sharp eye out for biased reporting.

Finally, a bit of wry humor:

Other opinions, which are easy to find online. Your bill might be going up because of:

1. Biden
2. Trump
3. Barack and/ or Hillary
4. Democrats
5. Republicans
6. Neoliberalism
7. Socialism
8. Lazy / corrupt politicians
9. Out of touch environmentalists
10. Greedy fossil fuel executives
11. Greedy power company executives
12. Anti-business EPA regulations
13. Too many wind and solar initiatives
14. Multi-year backlog on production of new gas turbines
15. Too much LNG being exported
16. Not enough gas pipelines
17. Taking coal and nuclear power plants offline
18. Too much spending on nuclear
19. Canadians overcharging us for their hydropower which they really should be giving us for free (Yeah Ken & Anne, I'm talkin' about you!).
20. Etc. I'm sure I've missed a lot. And just kidding about the Canadians. I think.

That's it for this issue. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Holidays to all! Keep warm! It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with you to build a stronger, better community. We'll be back in a couple months.