

An all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) - Serving Elk Rapids, Milton, Torch Lake, and Banks Townships

Spring 2026 Edition

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TODAY'S WEATHER:

www.wunderground.com/us/mi/kewadin

STORM CENTRAL

www.gtlakes.com/storm-central/



IT'S NOT TOO SOON TO RESTORE OTHER LOCAL CREEKS IN EASTB

EASTB Watershed Protection Plan identified seven perennial creeks flowing into East Grand Traverse Bay. Six are in Antrim County plus one in Charlevoix County. Nearly one-half of this 22-mile stretch of shoreline (23 square miles) consists of Preserves and Parks.

Countless seeps and ephemeral Creeks also exist. High water eroded beaches and bluffs, drowned bird and aquatic habitats, coastal ponds, guzzles, wetlands, sand spits, and islands. These are now re-surfacing with lower water.

Seven (7) perennial Creeks

#7. Whisky Creek.

Outflow. Lake shore Dr Norwood Twp.

#6. Antrim Creek. Outflow.

Near Brant Road, Banks Twp.

#5. Guyer Creek.

Outflow Near Timberlake Shore Rd Banks Twp.

#4. Creswell Creek

Outflow. Creswell Lane, Torchlake Twp.

#3. Mitchell Creek

Outflow. Joe Marks Trail, Milton Township

#2. Paradine Creek

Outflow. Winters Trail Elk Rapids Township

#1. Inwood Creek

Outflow. Inwood Harbor. Williams Rd, Elk Rapids



GRAND TRAVERSE BAY BOTTOMLANDS - NEARLY DEVOID OF LIFE

Restoring the Bay food web is daunting - but can be restored one stream at a time THE MITCHELL CREEK-KEWADIN PROJECT SHOWS HOW

Mitchell Creek in Kewadin is flowing again year-round.

Recent observations indicate that water is flowing through the creek all the way to East Grand Traverse Bay (EASTB) - although low flow last August. This improvement is linked to the removal of dams and debris piles on property east of Cairn Hwy, near Mud lake.



Better water movement reduced flooding and potential property damage, especially during spring runoff. Roots of valued hardwoods are dry again - basements are no longer threatened. The watershed, once split by obstructions is reconnected.

Project Outcomes and Challenges

The primary goals -to restore water flow and reduce flooding-have been achieved.



But it remains to be seen whether the Creek will attract and sustain trout populations, as drainage basin habitat has changed since trout were last present.

Farm and riparian residents identified factors contributing to habitat changes. Some are obvious - less precipitation & orchard avenues being mowed not plowed. Water diversions remain to overcome to restore trout-friendly conditions. Spring runoff will help address concerns of streamside property owners.

Next Steps

Overall, the project has been successful in restoring water flow for the entire year; slow laminar flow in the dryest month of August. Flooding risk has been reduced. Continued dialogue will address lingering concerns and explore options for further habitat and trout friendly flow improvements.

SPRING SUCKER RUN IN MITCHELL CREEK-KEWADIN?

You can help to monitor spawning run in this local creek.



Suckers are native fish that make a springtime migration. Some sucker species migrate from the depths of the Great Lakes into small creeks where their young can thrive. Suckers spawn in creeks so shallow that their backs stick out of the water. Shallow, rocky, or gravel-bottomed areas in streams called riffles are the preferred spawning habitat. Sucker swarms, once common, were seen near Mitchell Creek-Kewadin when it was dry. But fish had nowhere to go until year-round flow was restored last year by TNN & Rotary Club.

Want to learn more? Read the article BY: Daniel O'Keefe, Mich. Sea Grant MSU Extension March 12, 2025

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/spring-brings-spawning-fish-into-west-michigan-streams-and-you-can-help-to-monitor-spawning-runs-in-local-creeks-msg25-okeefe25

Michigan DNR & USDA
Habitat Protection
(2018–2021)

The goal was to protect areas of coastal wetland and other habitats in Michigan. Wildlife Services staff monitored targeted nineteen streams, surveyed about 200 acres, and removed 120 beaver dams.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the United States Department of Agriculture focused their efforts on protecting coastal wetlands and other habitats within Michigan.

Wildlife Services staff monitored targeted areas along nineteen streams, covering approximately 200 acres. Beaver dam removal improved flow to restore habitat and facilitate fish migration.

Continual stream surveys are crucial for success in maintaining the free-flowing conditions conducive to coaster brook trout migrations. USDA Wildlife Services will continue to ensure fish habitat and fish migration to spawning grounds is secured.



PLEASE DONATE TO TNN
A 501(c)(3) CHARITY. Extend Creek restoration beyond Mitchell Creek—Kewadin. The water is back – suckers may follow in spring. Rotary Club funded one year – Creek support is up to TNN. **Scan QR Code OR Use PAY PAL, credit & debit cards on www.townshipneighborsnetwork.com/Donate/ Mail a check. OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW**



SCAN ME

TNN BEACH RETROSPECTIVE--TNN BEACH RETROSPECTIVE --TNN BEACH RETROSPECTIVE

East Bay Beaches Over Time
October 1986 - 582.35 feet above sea level - All Time High Water



2003 Beach Walk
577.5 feet above sea level



2013 LOWEST WATER EVER
576.15 feet above sea level



2016 Beach Walk
579.5 feet above sea level



2019 Autumn
581.46 feet above sea level



2020 Spring
581.59 feet above sea level



2023 Summer
579.69 feet above sea level
ABOUT AVERAGE

Need for St. Clair River Flow Regulation

Water level decline in Lake MI-Huron is due in part to excess drainage through the St. Clair River near Port Huron -Sarnia.

Saint Lawrence Seaway was approved in 1962 by the US Congress and Canadian Parliament. It included construction of flow restricting vanes in the St. Clair River Only one foundation was ever built – no vane.

After 65 years, authorities have yet to restore the natural 4-0' range of these Great Lakes, now in the 6-0' range.

Environment Canada has forecast that water levels may decline below the record setting lows observed in 2013.

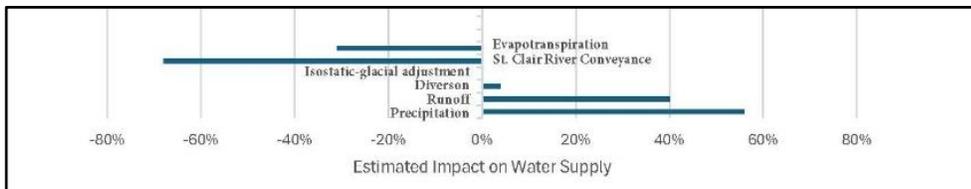
Impact: Water is draining out of Lake M-H at an accelerated rate by erosion. Loose ice, carrying sediment, is proof.

Georgian Bay, Ontario, residents sounded a low water alarm. Birds, eat Botulism in Zebra mussels, and die. Volunteers bury them.

WATER LEVELS IN LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON – UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

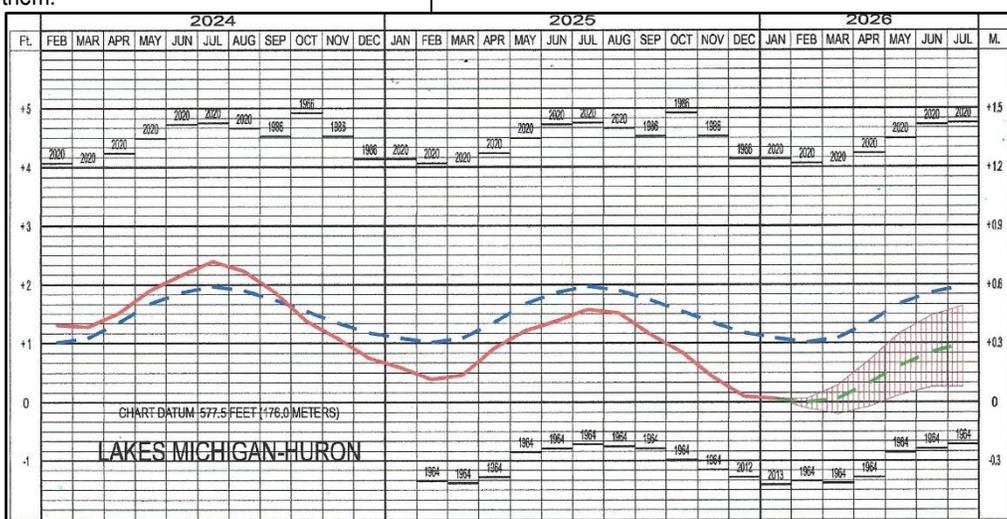
AI OVERVIEW: Data from twenty-four sources incl. Great Lakes Commission, GLISA, Environment & Climate Change Canada, USGS, NOAA, Michigan Tech, Great Lakes Surface Environmental Analysis, ACE.

For centuries, Lake MI-Huron water levels varied 4 feet, dredging, locks, shoreline hardening and diversion since the 1880's increased that range to 6 feet. East Grand Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan-Huron are currently 49 inches below their 1986 all-time high to 12 inches below average (story below). Michigan-Huron waters drain out through the St. Clair River near Port Huron-Sarnia. Channel erosion has a lasting impact on the River's ability to transit water. It lowers the bottom under water rather than contributing to short term variability.



The combination of **precipitation + runoff – evaporation** is dominant. Changes in the conveyance capacity of the St. Clair River does not directly cause water level fluctuations. Instead, changes lower the baseline average water level.

WATER LEVELS FORECAST FEBRUARY 2026 - US Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit



Scouring of the Riverbed needs to be quantified but has not been funded. End ice breaking in the St Clair River is an easy first step.

Effect on Commerce. Low water forces lighter ship loads. An ice breaker keeps the River open – but no ships.

Conclusion: Measure the scouring rate of the St Clair River channel. Build-out vane flow restrictors. **READ MORE:** [Need for St. Clair River Flow Regulation](https://www.manitoulin.com/georgian-bay-group-seeking-closure-of-st-clair-river-to-shipping-in-winter-months/)

 January precipitation for Michigan-Huron basin was average. Over the past 12 months, cumulative precipitation has been average for all basins, ranging from 96% to 108% of average. Lake Michigan-Huron's water supplies for January were below average. Outflows were near average. December to January, Lake Michigan-Huron's water level remained steady at 12 inches below average. Editors Note: Even though the Bay, EASTB, froze over, larger water bodies did not. Without ice cover lower water levels are expected.



Boat house

Photos below on Les Cheneaux Islands illustrate the point: Extreme low water (left) and highwater (right) These Islands are in Lake Huron near the Upper Peninsula.

Republished: Courtesy of Restore Our Water International (ROWI).