

Winter 2026 Lake Huron Water Levels Our 2025 Activities



Lake Huron Water Levels

by Daniel Featherstone

Let's Talk About Water Levels

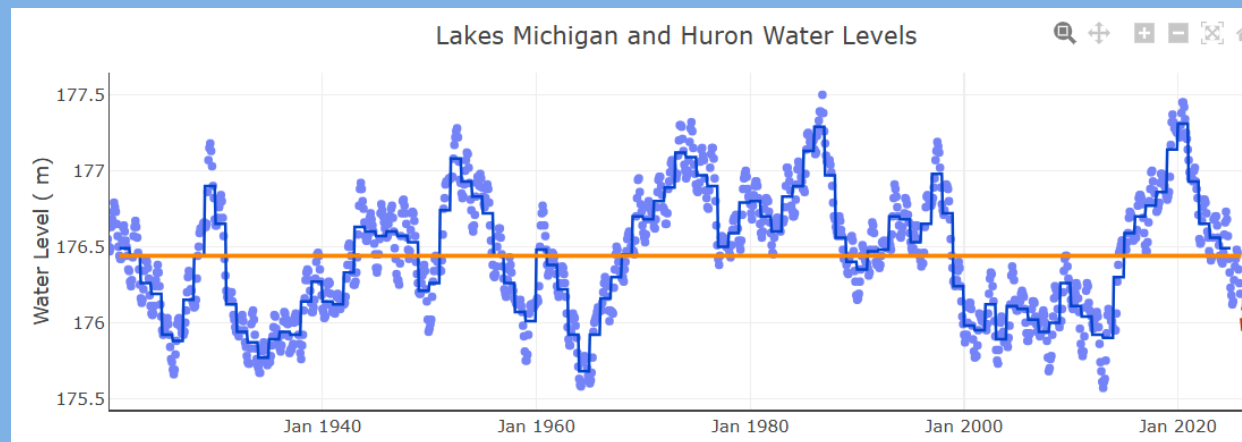
We've noticed a lot of discussion on our recent posts about water levels on Lake Huron. While it's true that levels are lower than they have been in the past few years, we wanted to share some context about what causes these changes. It can definitely feel alarming to see big rises and drops, but the fluctuations we are seeing right now are not unusual. Water levels on Lake Huron and across the Great Lakes naturally vary due to a wide range of factors.

A Look at Lake Huron's Water Level History

As shown in the figure below, water levels on Lake Huron and Lake Michigan, which share the same hydrologic system, have risen and fallen many times since recordkeeping began in the early 1900s. Lake Huron's long-term average level is about 176.4 m above sea level. In 2019 and 2020, the lake reached near record highs around 177.4 m. Today, levels sit around 176 m, which is roughly 40 cm below the long-term average.

Part of the reason the current drop feels dramatic is that we are coming off several years of extremely high water. That makes today's levels look and feel much lower than they truly are. All data shown here is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):

<https://www.glerl.noaa.gov/data/wlevels/dashboard/>



(Figure 1: Lake Huron Water Levels. Source: NOAA, n.d.)

What Affects Lake Huron's Water Levels?

Water levels are always changing, but different processes act on different timescales. Some influence local areas over hours or days, while others shape the lake over months or years.

Short term factors:

Water levels can shift quickly due to wind, pressure systems, and storms. Strong winds can push water from one side of the lake to the other, raising levels on the downwind shore. Changing atmospheric pressure can cause the lake surface to temporarily rise or fall. Storm events may produce seiches, which are oscillating water movements that make levels slosh up and down. Heavy rainfall can cause brief increases, while rapid evaporation during cold, dry air outbreaks can cause sudden drops. Ice conditions can also affect how water moves along the shoreline. Even short-term changes in flow through the St. Clair River can influence day-to-day levels.

Long term factors:

Long-term water levels are driven by broader climate patterns that unfold over months to decades. Temperature trends, precipitation, runoff, and evaporation all play major roles in determining how much water the lake gains or loses. Wet years with above-average rain or snowpack can raise levels, while extended dry periods or warmer temperatures that lead to more evaporation can lower them. Ice cover also matters. Less winter ice increases evaporation, and while some of that

moisture returns as lake effect snow, not all of it falls back into the Lake Huron watershed. Over time, natural changes in the St. Clair River's channel, sediment movement, and other hydrologic processes can influence outflow as well. Together, these factors drive the long-term rises and declines we see over many years.

Conclusion

Should we be worried about the recent decline in water levels? At this point, it is too early to conclude. The current pattern does not look unusual when compared with more than a century of data. That said, it is always worth paying attention to these trends. Decreasing ice cover and gradually warming regional temperatures may influence water levels in the future, and continued monitoring will be important as conditions evolve.

JOIN US FOR THE AGM

Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition

Annual General Meeting

March 18, 2026

2:00 – 4:00 pm

In Person – Municipality of Huron Shores. Municipal Office,

7 Bridge Street, Iron Bridge, ON.

cafreshwatercoalition@gmail.com

Our 2025 Activities

Thank you to CAFCs Board of Directors Board; David Ratz, Bob Kellum Daniel Featherstone, Phil Riley and Chuck Miller.

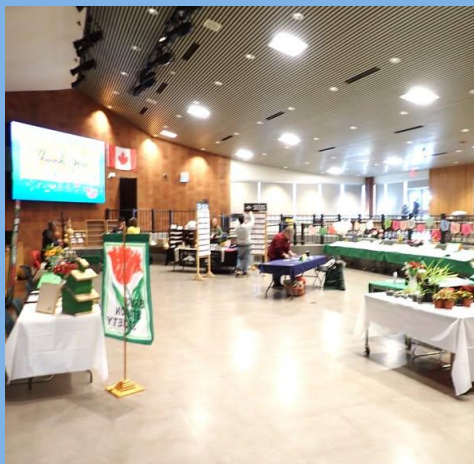
We are always looking for new Board members – hope you can join us. If you wish - you can sit in on a few meetings before deciding.

Your Board has been meeting virtually on the internet on video conferencing and in person when possible.

Programs

Website / Facebook / Newsletters

CAFC Maintains a website and Facebook page (more than 9000 views) and publishes seasonal newsletters.



Seedy Saturday

Central Algoma Seedy Saturday “Thank You” to the organizers, visitors, presenters, fellow exhibitors and vendors that attended Seedy Saturday in Desbarats. CAFC is pleased to participate in your event. A beautiful day in Central Algoma.

Sustain Algoma

“Thank You” to all who made the Sustain Algoma Expo a success - It was nice to meet people and talk about their interests in Central Algoma. CAFC had 5 new publications at the Expo - an Explore Local Map - and booklets on Sustainable Living, Adapting to Climate Change in Algoma, Biodiversity and Natural History in Algoma - the publications are online at our website under the resources/ reports tab.

www.centralalgomafreshwatercoalition.ca.

CAFC’s was a Bronze Sponsor of the event in 2025.





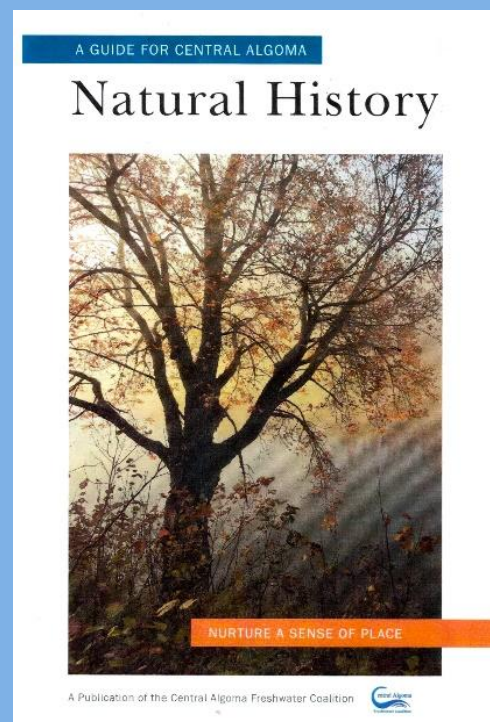
Municipal Parks – Red Maples CAFC was successful in getting a grant for \$2500 to plant red maple trees (5-8 feet tall) in municipal parks in Central Algoma to replace dead ash trees that were killed by the emerald ash borer and removed for visitor safety. The trees arrived in the spring of 2025 and were distributed by Harvest Algoma to the Municipality of Huron Shores and the Town of Bruce Mines.

Natural History – Nurture Your Sense of Place

CAFC secured a grant of \$7000.00 from Lake Huron North to print and distribute the booklets. CAFC also partnered with Lake Huron North to boost Facebook posts on the Natural History Project

Watersheds – Inspiration in Ribbons of Blue

CAFC was successful in getting a grant for \$8000 from The Lake Huron – Georgian Bay Community Action Framework to develop a booklet Watersheds – Inspiration in Ribbons of Blue. Research on the booklet began in May and continued through to December. The booklet will be published in 2026.



Lake Huron North (LHN)

CAFC participates in Lake Huron North (LHN), a network of organizations who strive to improve water quality through collaboration and community-based stewardship. They work together in a coordinated effort with local community groups, individual volunteers, landowners, and the public service, to protect and improve overall water quality and habitats in and around the St. Marys River and West North Channel of Lake Huron.

The goals of LHN are to maximize the efficacy of individual organizations and communities, to increase local capacities to respond to threats in the Lake Huron basin, and to provide information related to stewardship efforts. Although actions are local, we consider our global responsibilities as stewards of some of the greatest freshwater bodies in the world.

Thank You to Our Supporters

Thank you to for financial support from members, private donations and the Township of MacDonald Meredith and Aberdeen Additional. Thank you to the Municipality of Huron Shores for meeting space including our Annual General Meeting and the the Municipality of Huron Shores and the Town of Bruce Mines for planting trees in your municipal parks.

Become a Member



Your annual membership fee will provide a base budget for work of CAFC and demonstrate the commitment of local partners working towards a common goal. A strong diverse group is an essential component in meeting the goals of the Central Algoma Region.

Support us at <https://www.centralalgomafreshwatercoalition.ca>