

What's Up Along the **LAKE HURON** Shoreline?

June 2020

Photo by Kara DeVlieger

LAKE HURON WATER LEVELS

Water levels on Lake Huron have been above seasonal record highs since January 2020. These high levels are the result of three years of very high precipitation which has fallen over the Lake Michigan-Huron basin. Lake Huron water levels are projected to remain above or close to record highs throughout the summer.

SHORELINE EROSION

From 2000 - 2013, Lake Huron experienced a long period of below average water levels. Although erosion was not occurring along the shoreline, there was significant erosion happening underwater in the nearshore zone. Nearshore erosion results in waves reaching further inland once water levels increase. Now that the water levels have risen, erosion along the shoreline bluffs and dunes have intensified.

Bluff erosion is a serious concern because it places structures and life at risk. Toe erosion destabilizes the bluff and leads to top-of-bluff recession. Erosion at the top of the bluff may occur in one large failure or in many smaller failures. Unfortunately there is no way to predict the exact timing of these failures.

EXAMPLE of RECENT EROSION



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Maitland Conservation recommends that landowners check their shoreline property, when possible, to look for signs of erosion. Bent or leaning trees, lack of vegetation on the slope, slumping, overland flow and groundwater seepage are all signs that your property is in an area of erosion. If you see a crack running parallel to the shoreline, please contact Maitland Conservation as it is a sign that a failure will occur.

Shore protection is a short-term fix and landowners should not rely on these structures to prevent erosion. Maitland Conservation strongly recommends moving structures away from high-risk areas to improve the safety of property and life.

SHORELINE POLICIES UPDATE

Maitland Conservation's shoreline policies regulate development within the various natural hazards of the Lake Huron Shoreline.

An amendment to these policies was recently approved. This update allows shoreline landowners with primary structures at the toe (bottom) of the bluff to apply for retaining walls higher than 1 metre. This work still requires an assessment from a coastal specialist or engineer but reduces the need for a full coastal study. Retaining walls higher than 1 metre may only be proposed to protect an existing primary structure (cottage or house) and/or existing septic system. For information visit the Lake Huron page on our website at: mvca.on.ca/lake-huron-shoreline

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To view erosion hazard mapping for your section of shoreline visit the maps section of our website:

mvca.on.ca/about-us/documentspublications/

If you would like more information on water levels and erosion processes visit the Lake Huron page of our website:

mvca.on.ca/lake-huron-shoreline/