



**Draft Report – Impacts on Upper Great Lakes Water Levels: St. Clair River
FACT SHEET -- The Review Process: Internal and External**

- **Multiple levels of peer review, both internal and external.** The review process includes both internal reviewers, at every level within the Study, and external independent reviewers.
- **Expert external review is independent of IUGLS and IJC.** The International Joint Commission (IJC) contracted with the Environmental and Water Resources Institute (EWRI) of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and with the Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA) to provide Independent Peer Review (IPR) of the work of the IUGLS. The IPR is conducted at arm's-length from the Study and the IJC with neither the IJC nor the Study Board influencing the selection of the peer review panelists or influencing the outcome of the peer review process. Peer review panelists must be independent of the Study. Over the duration of the Study, these two national, professional organizations will engage experts to review six methodological reports, 14 to 18 scientific reports, six to seven synthesis documents and the two final reports.
- **First ever continuous and ongoing Independent Peer Review process.** For the first time, an IJC binational study is benefiting from a continuous and on-going independent scientific review of work plans, technical research and reports. Because of the importance of this Study, it is being subject to a higher level of independent scientific scrutiny. The IPR is continuous in that it began early in the Study, is frequently occurring, and concludes following input on final products. Unlike other peer review processes that only subject a final report to review when changes cannot be made, a key benefit of this continuous and ongoing approach is that recommendations and advice from peer reviewers can be incorporated in the final report.
- **The IPR process supplements a rigorous internal review process.** The St. Clair River portion of the Study involves Technical Work Groups (TWGs) that focus on the fundamental scientific disciplines (Sediment, Hydraulics, Hydroclimatology, etc.). Each TWG includes scientists and engineers from each country supervised by a co-lead. The TWGs report to the St. Clair River Task Team. Reports prepared by scientists involved in the TWGs are reviewed by the group members, the co-leads and the Task Team. In addition, reports are reviewed by the government agencies in which the scientists are employed. For example, at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), reports prepared by USGS scientists undergo two levels of review within their agency.
- **The Study Board synthesizes scientific results and is the final level of review.** The task team co-leads bring forward to the Study Board products for their review, input and approval. Study Board approval is the final step in the internal process, and the Board determines when reports are ready for public release. Ultimately, the Study Board analyzes and synthesizes the information that has been developed by multiple researchers in order to make the recommendations reflected in the draft report. Going forward, the Board will apply that same rigor in order to make sure that the final report reflects the results of the scientific review process, public comment and any additional research completed prior to the October 1 due date of the final report to the International Joint Commission.

- **The Independent Peer Review process is transparent.** Information regarding the peer review process, the names of the review team (including their affiliations and experience), and the review documents are available at <http://content.ewrinstitute.org/committees/IUGLS.cfm>. The peer reviews are provided directly to the IJC and through the Commission to the Study Board for response. The IJC must authorize posting of such reports on the website.
- **Acceleration of the schedule affected timing of the peer review process.** At the request of the Georgian Bay Association, the Great Lakes Commission, and several members of the U.S. Congress, publication of the draft St. Clair report was accelerated by one year. The continuous and ongoing multi-stage sequences of peer reviews reflect this accelerated schedule as much as possible. For example, the Study Board decided to release the draft report regarding the St Clair River for public review and input, since the methodologies were previously approved by the Independent Peer Reviewers and integrated into the Study work plan, and since the key study reports had already undergone multiple levels of internal peer review.
- **The public will have another opportunity to comment following the completion of the review process.** In October, the Study Board will transmit a final report to the IJC that reflects completion of the peer review process with respect to the St. Clair River report, public comments and additional research and analysis conducted over the summer. Before making recommendations to the governments, the IJC is expected to hold formal hearings.
- **Where do we stand now with respect to internal and external review?**
 1. **Three External Methodological Independent Peer Reviews regarding the St. Clair River report have been completed:**
 - Hydraulic and Sediment Modelling Strategy
 - Hydroclimatology Modelling Strategy
 - Uncertainty Analysis

These Independent Peer Reviews were critically important to the Study Board as they developed an overall approach and linked the various efforts into a cohesive work plan for the Study. In addition, one external methodological peer review has already taken place regarding the second portion of the Study to evaluate Lake Superior regulation plan options.

2. **The IPR teams are currently reviewing eight specific technical reports.** The IPR teams are examining eight technical reports to assess whether the individual researchers conducted the analyses as planned in the methodological strategy previously peer reviewed and whether the study scientists' interpretations and conclusions are supported by the analyses for public decision-making.
3. **The draft report will then be reviewed with special emphasis on the three key scientific synthesis chapters.** This sequential process allows for consistency in approach and assures a more complete and integrated analysis.
4. **Individual scientific reports, more than 40 in total, will be released as they are finalized to reflect internal and external reviews.** The Study Board is committed to releasing all reports as soon as possible. In addition, 2-3 page summaries of all reports will be posted on the Study webpage by the end of May in a compendium, providing a convenient way for the public to review specific report findings. These summaries will include the names and affiliations of all authors.