

2019 High Water Impact Report

September 2019

1000 Islands International
Tourism Council

1000 Islands

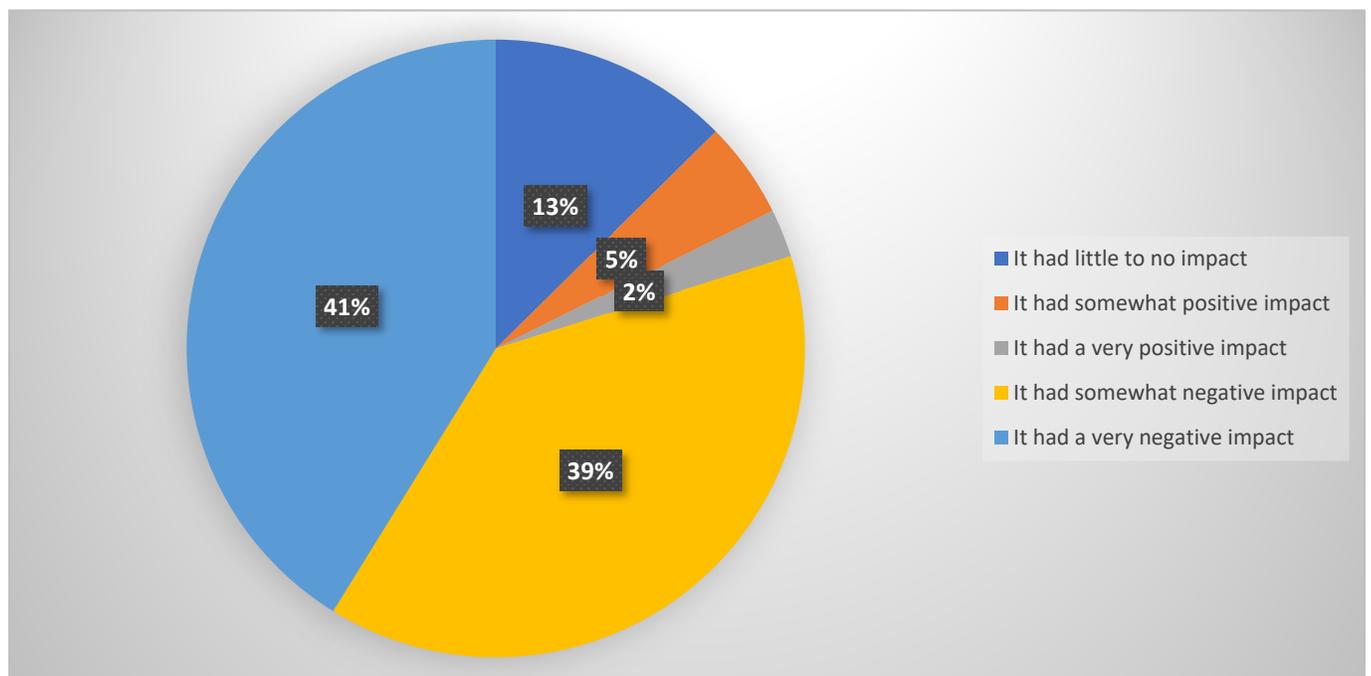
2019 High Water Impact Survey

Survey of regional tourism businesses

The 1000 Islands International Tourism Council conducted an informal survey in early September regarding high water impacts on tourism businesses. An email request to complete the survey was sent to 482 tourism stakeholders in the Council’s database. The survey garnered responses from 119 stakeholders. While the survey is not a scientific example, it does reflect the experiences of a substantial cross-section of tourism interests in the region. The data and numerous comments from the survey illustrate the impact of a second high water event in the region during the past three seasons.

What best describes the impact of this year’s high water on your business?

A majority of responders – 80% -- saw negative impacts from the high water. A small portion – 13% -- reported no impact while even less, 7%, reported positive impacts.

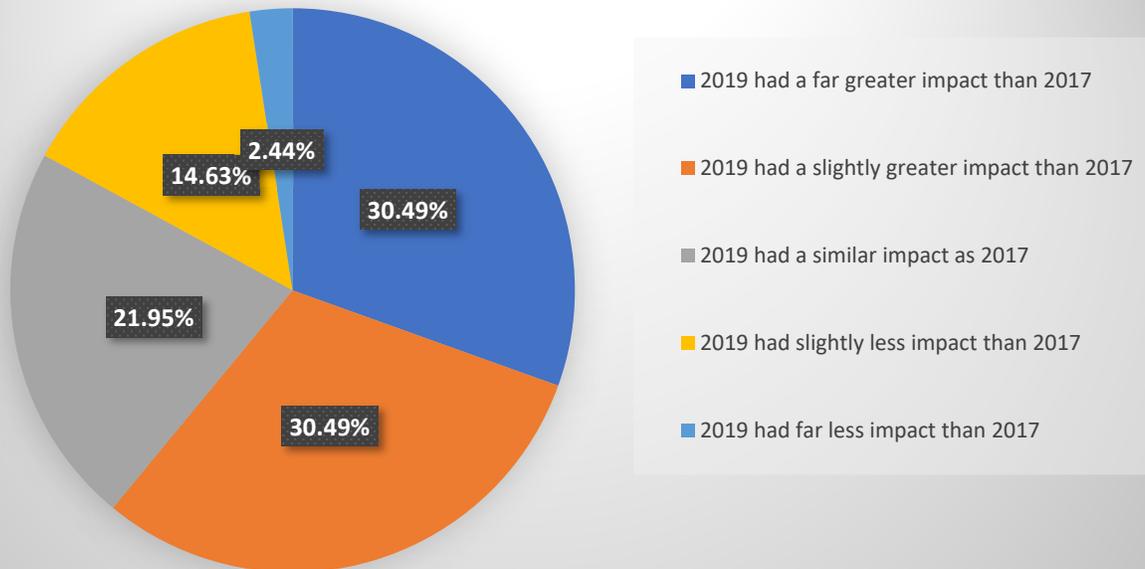


Thinking of your own business, how would you rate the following types of negative impacts?

Type of impact	No impact	A little impact	Quite a bit of impact	A lot of impact
Direct physical damage from high water	23.81%	17.86%	20.24%	38.10%
High water impeding business operations	13.95%	24.42%	24.24%	37.21%
High water discouraging visitation to the area	5.68%	23.86%	32.95%	37.50%

Of the total, 96 business reported negative impacts. Asked to rate various negative factors, businesses rated the high water discouraging visitation to the area as having the most severe impact.

Considering your own business, how would you compare the impact of high water in 2019 to the 2017 season’s high water?



Asked to compare 2019 to the last high water event, a majority of 82 responding stakeholders said this year had a greater impact than 2017’s levels.

Which of the following best describes the impact of high water on your business during each month?

	No impact	Little impact	Quite a bit of impact	A lot of impact
May	8.86%	30.38%	17.72%	43.04%
June	0%	22.22%	30.86%	46.91%
July	12.35%	22.22%	30.86%	34.57%
August	22.50%	31.25%	27.50%	18.75%
Expected September	32.89%	40.79%	13.16%	13.16%
Expected October	50.00%	29.73%	10.81%	9.46%

The survey showed stakeholders reported the greatest impacts in June with reductions in impacts as summer progressed. Stakeholders reported greater impacts in August compared to the same month in 2017; the water sustained higher levels throughout 2019 compared to two years ago.

Compared to an “average” year, what percentage of your business was lost in 2019 due to various high water impacts?

Range of loss	Percentage	Count
0-9%	15%	13
10-19%	20%	17
20-29%	20%	17
30-39%	11%	9
40-49%	12%	10
50% or more	22%	19
Total replies		85

The survey asked stakeholders who indicated negative impact to estimate the amount of lost business compared to a year of “normal” water levels. Among the 85 who replied, the average business loss was 31%. A third of replying stakeholders – 34% -- indicated losses of at least 40% of business.

Thinking of your own business, which of the following is a greater priority for future years?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Rebuilding/adjusting my physical space to accommodate greater fluctuations in water levels.	52.11%	37
Greater investment in marketing to let potential customers know I am open despite water level changes.	47.89%	34
<i>Answered</i>		71
<i>Skipped</i>		48

About those who replied:

Please indicate your type of business:

Type	Percentage	Number
Lodging	41.84%	41
Marine	34.69%	34
Attraction	24.49%	24
Fishing/Hunting	18.37%	18
Retail	15.31%	15
Campground	10.20%	10
Event/Entertainment	8.16%	8
Dining	7.14%	7
	<i>Answered</i>	98
	<i>Skipped</i>	21

Where is your business located:

Location	Percentage	Number
Canada	22.45%	22
USA	77.55%	76
	<i>Answered</i>	98
	<i>Skipped</i>	21

What body of water most impacts your business:

Location	Percentage	Number
Lake Ontario	25.51%	25
St. Lawrence River	73.47%	72
Tributaries/inland waters	1.02	1
	Answered	98
	Skipped	21

OUT of BUSINESS. Did not receive the NYS money that WE applied for. Still paying for 2017 to say nothing of 2019.
The high water made it unsafe in many ways, Docks underwater and very slippery. The currents for diving kept some divers from coming. Now wake sones added hrs to or voyages only allowing us to make 1 charter a day from 2.
Desperation
Thought it was just due to the weather and was just your unusual situation but for this to happen again, I have to believe the weather is not the only factor. For a repeated situation, visitors are looking at things more carefully when vacationing in this area.
The business trends were about the same. Bookings were down during the earlier part of the summer but did pick up towards the end. The debris in the water seemed to be more prominent with the 2019 flooding with a lot of "dead heads" which you cannot see.
Water levels went down faster than in 2019
We had the same kind of issues that we had this year with decreased revenues of all kinds and increased expenses
After 2017 I made improvements that helped damage in 2019
The new water management plan, P2014, needs to be repealed. The IJC needs to have their immunity from prosecution revoked and be held accountable for their devastating failures. Record shipping and power production profits need to assist in compensating for all the business and shoreline owners losses.
It was terrible to have to make repairs , spend money and now have to do it all over again

Similar, but we assumed that was a one in a million event. Now worried that this is the new normal.
As long as I had floating docks I was able to dock my boat and run my dive business with few issues. The biggest issue with my divers was the higher current due to letting so much water out at one time it made diving more strenuous.
Repeal Plan 2014
Unexpected meaning we were not prepared. This year we were ready.
Seemed like a surprise and crisis
The water level was quite high, but my dock, thankfully, was just high enough not to be submerged.
2017 was bad but 2019 did more physical damage
Cancelled 3 cruises in May
I could not possibly respond the the states dead line for how to rebuild in July when we were dealing with our business to survive.
Devastated my spring business cost me \$15,000 in dock and waterfront revitalization and couldn't get a penny from NY state
List revenue but less physical damage to Property 2019 water levels constantly high and large tour boats and other watercraft made situation worse by creating waves
The high water damaged our dock. We got an okay to rebuild it in 2018 we have already paid the contractor a partial payment(in 2018 do we could secure a spot on his calendar) and he still has not fixed our dock
I hope the ijc is faster being pro-active in winter letting out water and plan 2014 is scrapped. it is not helping the fish or wildlife
Believe it to be caused by nature and believe we need to be pro-active.

2017 was different the water dropped faster and the season was warmer from a temperature standpoint. This made for great fishing, allowed businesses to get back to normal faster.
Fortunately, my docks are higher than most and they remained above water both this year and in 2017. I did suffer some erosion two years ago and some dock damage this year, but nothing major. If the docks had been below water it could have been a different situation as a lot of people who stay with me have boats and/or fish.
It cost me more money to run my boat and time.
2017 was a surprise and we fumbled thru the experience...lost business & Money in 2017 , trying to make up for my initial start up expenses.This year, I hesitated (luckily) to put out too much effort or monetary investment until I knew if we were going to experience high water again. Had more experience in "drop back & punt"
The 1000 Islands Tourism Council should have a permanent seat on the international joint commission to represent business owners, and in turn would represent all property owners!
no problem
This is a preventative disaster. Demand that the IJC return to the control model of past 50 years where the variance was 4' (spring to fall) currently now close to 7'. Dam must remain at max outflows thru fall to shed the extra 12-15" of water as a result of plan 2014. Without action , spring 2020 will be far worse , and there won't be opportunity to adapt to the new normal this is not normal , it's gross incompetence by IJC board

Waterfront dock system was compromised in 2017 (but not obvious until Spring of 2018). High water in 2019 further damaged the docks necessitating replacement and upgrades.
2017 media was bad. They sent a very negative message and 2019 was all positive
It was our first year open, so we didn't have anything to compare it to.
What a disaster. Hydro and Shipping seems to be much more important than the average citizen. I don't care about the wetlands and some bird or species. So many people are going to move out and abandon towns because they can't make a living. How the environmentalist get a hold and the big business makes me mad. We the people live here and it's up to companies to work around us. The River has been fine for 50 years since the seaway was built. Life is full of changes and cycles. Leave it alone. You have destroyed businesses and peoples lives saving the green dotted whatever the heck bird/fish. Evolution and the strongest will survive in the wild. In the towns if we can't make money to pay our bills we will become extinct.....or move away
High water impact in 2017 - Not applicable
We were much better prepared for the High water in 2019 than we were in 2017. I feel that we can expect higher water levels in the future and we need to make permanent changes to our facilities to be able to operate in the event of higher water levels in the future. Our experience was that we overcame a lot of the difficulties of the high water and everyone tried to have a positive attitude about the situation and came together as a team to make the changes needed to operate.

Many seasonal boaters cancelled their contracts due to lack of power on their docks caused by the high water conditions.

Compiled by the 1000 Islands International
Tourism Council.

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