

Timeline: County has endured flooding along shoreline on several occasions

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Flooding along Lake Erie's shoreline is a risk whenever strong winds out of the northeast combine with heavy rains or already high water levels. But there are three occasions that stand out in the historical records: the floods of 1973, 1985 and 1998.

Here are some details from those

three storms as found in The Monroe News files:

April 1973

For decades, April 9, 1973, was considered the worst flood in Monroe County history. The reason: 50 mph winds propelled waves over the top of breakwalls and dikes; in some cases, shattering them as they came ashore.

As a result, 30 homes were destroyed,

300 homes had major damage and 2,500 had minor damage. And more than 10,000 residents were evacuated.

"I have never seen the lake as wild as it was during that storm – the waves were 40 to 50 feet high," a Detroit Beach resident said.

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History (cont.)

March-April 1985

The late March-early April flood of 1985 resulted in Monroe County declared a federal disaster area.

This was the first time since 1973 this happened because of lake flooding.

There were evacuations in Luna Pier, as the newly built seawall wasn't quite high enough. The lake levels were at an all-time high to begin with; and storm-waters surged higher. The dike in Detroit Beach was washed away and Lakeview St. in that community was covered by 3 to 5 feet of water. North Shores, Morin Point and Estral Beach also were hit hard.

Damage from this storm was estimated at over \$10

million – about half of the damage calculated from that storm. But multiple residents reported that this was the worst they had seen since 1973.

April 1998

"It's a big mess," read the banner headline on The Monroe Evening News on April 10. The story read:

"More than 2.2 inches of rain has fallen on Monroe County Saturday and Sunday, saturating farm fields and raising the water levels in all streams in the region. The level of the River Raisin was at 8.14 feet at the Monroe Water Filtration Plant off E. Front St. at 6 p.m. Monday. That's less than a foot below flood stage."

This was the description of the worst Lake Erie storm to hit Monroe County in 25

years. An already high lake level, record amount of rain and gale-force northeast winds packed a wallop. The lake levels in Toledo measured almost 100 inches above normal – the highest reading since 1973.

The storm surge the day before caused flood levels to rise high and fast. Waves of 9 to 12 feet crashed against the dikes in LaSalle. An earthen dike broke in Allen Cove; waves pounded over the breakwalls in Luna Pier where about 30 homes were evacuated.

"We saw the waves getting serious and we could see the winds were blowing hard," Morin Point resident George Breier said. "The next thing you know, the whole lake is coming into your yard."