

JORDAN LAKE WATER QUALITY

By Mike Backus

At the start of 2007 I volunteered to lead the water quality testing of our lake. Taking responsibility of our own testing is part of the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) program in the state of Wisconsin.

My Adams County training started with the first monitoring on 6/06/07. Each month thereafter I performed water quality testing under the supervision of our Adams County Lake Specialist. During 2008 I am approved to do our monitoring unsupervised. If anyone is interested in assisting me, contact me at 414-507-7211.

2007 RESULTS

WATER CLARITY

Water clarity is measured by using an 8-inch diameter plate (Secchi Disc) with alternating quadrants painted black and white. The Secchi Disc is lowered via a line into the deep water until the colors are no longer distinguishable. The length of the line in the water determines the clarity reading in terms of feet--the higher the number the better the clarity of water. The State records only the July and August average for each year. The 2007 average of 11.1 feet was the worst since 1994 which was 10 feet. The best reading we have since 1993 was 18.3 feet in 1997. My review of our data tells me our clarity has been dropping since the 90's and into early 2000.

During 2008 I plan to do much more extensive monitoring to see the impact of boat traffic, rain and warm weather on the clarity of our water.

WATER LEVEL

I measure the lake level by using a gauge placed next to my pier. I set my measuring device at '0' when I put in my pier and log any change in depth until I take it out in fall. Pretty unofficial but it provides me with some specific numbers to record.

When I took my pier out on 10/05/07 I recorded that we lost 6.5" of lake depth since 05/05/07. However, my records show that on August 2nd we were down a full 14" since May 5th! The Fall rains helped us recover some of that loss but the final reading indicates this is the 2nd if not 3rd year in a row we have ended the summer with a significant loss of lake depth. Can't wait to see what all this snow means to the lake level!

PHOSPHORUS TESTING

The major nutrient influencing plant growth in our lakes is Phosphorus. Once a month I do a chemical test for the Phosphorus level in Jordan Lake and send the sample to Stevens Point for analysis and recording. Our average reading for 2007 is slightly better than in 2002 (most recent data on record) but much worse than any time in the 90's according to the incomplete data on record.

Phosphorus is a major concern to our lake and is one thing we can make a big difference in controlling if we refuse to use fertilizer with Phosphorus (middle number on the package e.g. 30-0-45) on our lawns.

CHLOROPHYLL

The second chemical testing I perform monthly is for Chlorophyll which is the green pigment present in all plant life. The amount of Chlorophyll present in lake water depends on the amount of algae. I also send this monthly sample to Stevens Point for analysis and recording. My review of our 2007 readings shows that it was the worst since 1996. The dry and hot summer is a major factor. On the positive side it may have been bad last year but nothing like what many of us see in other lakes that were “green” all summer long.