

WHITE LAKE

PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION
ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEERS



White Lake Checkups

2026

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White Lake Zebra Mussels

Every two weeks from mid-May to mid-October we sample White Lake. Nine sites are monitored covering all parts of the lake. After each of these 'sampling runs' a White Lake Checkup is issued. Checkups are short and concise summaries of the condition of White Lake on the sampling date. Information is usually also provided for similar readings done a year earlier for comparison purposes. White Lake Checkups are generally published on the White Lake Property Owners Association [Facebook](#) page, as well as other local Facebook pages covering all four municipalities sharing parts of White Lake. Checkup compilations for this and other years can be downloaded from the [Special Report Page](#) on the [White Lake Science](#) website.

Below is a compilation of the White Lake Checkups issued during 2026.



White Lake Checkup: May 7, 2026

May 17th marked the beginning of our 13th season sampling White Lake and reporting to the community on its condition. It was a relatively warm and cloud-free morning as we (Conrad Grégoire and David Overholt) completed our first sampling excursion of the year. We collected three samples at each of our monitoring sites. Two were duplicate samples for total phosphorus and the third sample was collected for the measurement of calcium, chloride and sulphate levels. All samples were analyzed by the Ministry of the Environment's laboratories in Dorset Ontario under the auspices of the Lake Partner Program co-managed with the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA). In addition to these samples, we also make temperature and water clarity measurements and collect plankton samples using a specialized net. These samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Ice Cover: White Lake was deemed to be ice-free on April 18th (April 19th last year). In 2025, the lake was ice-free for 230 days. The average for the previous 5 years was 249 days.

Kudos: Ice in and ice out dates are monitored by Karen and Brian Cairns, White Lake residents. We are grateful for their work doing this for many years now. Thank you!

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 13.3°C. The temperature last year at this time was 13.6°C. The hot spot on the lake was Hayes Bay with a water temperature of 15.2 °C.

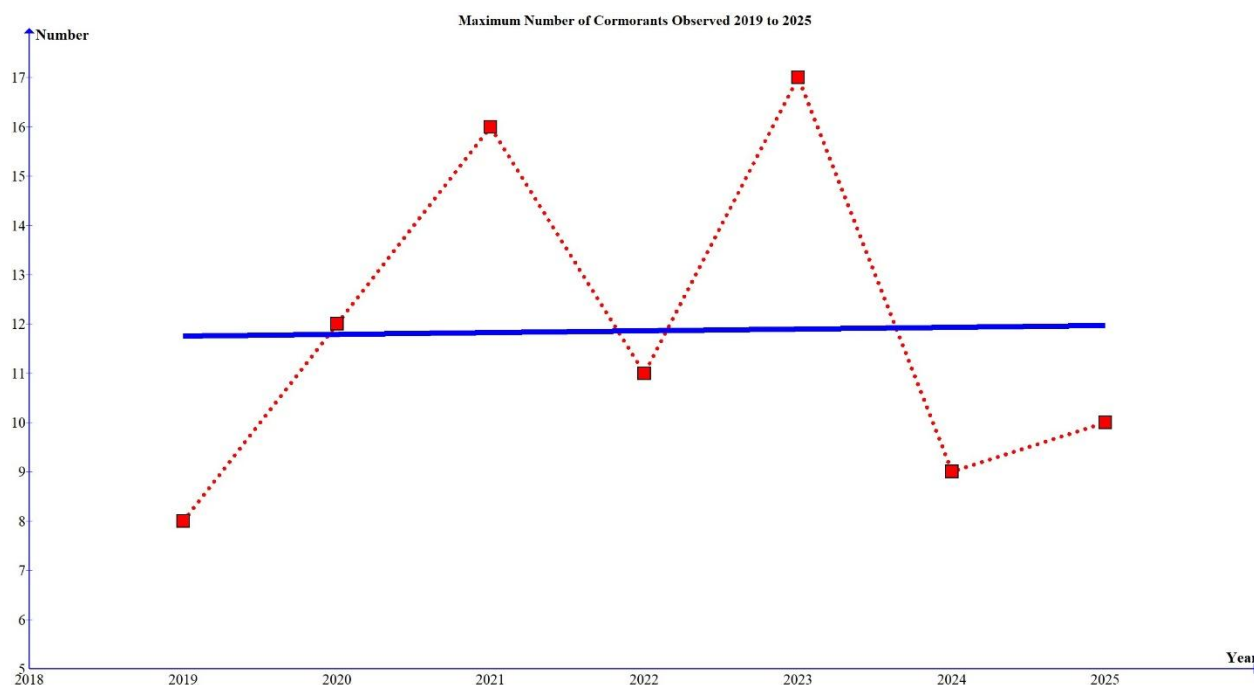
Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as a Secchi depth was 5.8 metres; 0.2 metres less clear than last year. A Secchi depth of 6 metres means that sunlight can penetrate lake waters 12 metres deep. Since the maximum depth of White Lake is 9.1 metres, this means

that the entire bed of the lake is illuminated with sunlight leading to increased aquatic plant growth.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 158.2 cm as compared to the target depth of 158.5 cm. Right on target!

Cormorants: For the past seven years we have been collecting data on cormorant populations on White Lake. The graph below shows the maximum number of cormorants observed on the lake during the nesting period. Over the last six years, the numbers have ranged from 8 to 17 individuals. The blue line is the statistical best fit line for the population data. This line has essentially no slope which indicates that on average, the cormorant population is stable. In any case, the number of cormorants is very small and poses no threat to the health of White Lake and the surrounding forests. After all, they are a native species and belong here.

We will no longer report on cormorant counts every two weeks, but will continue our counts and report on our finding in our annual reports.



WHITE LAKE CHECKUP: May 31, 2026

Our second sampling run of the year was completed under cloudy skies, with an air temperature of about 13°C. A stiff wind on the lake made the experience a cold one!

We measured water temperature and clarity at our 9 sites and collected plankton samples as well. The plankton samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 17.4°C, which was nearly three degrees warmer than last year on this date. The water temperature two years ago was 18.7°C. Clearly, lake water temperatures are linked to atmospheric temperatures and do vary from year to year.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi Depth was 5.0 metres. Last year at this time, water clarity was an average of 6.1 metres; over 1 metre more. Even though the weather has been relatively cool, biological activity in the lake is high. In recent days, significant amounts of pollen have also entered the lake. Please read out Environment Bulletin entitled 'Pollen Storm' available at the following link: http://wlpp.ca/linked/pollen_storm.pdf

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 154 cm (156 cm last year) as compared to the target depth of 149 cm. This is 5 centimetres higher than called for in the water depth plan for the lake.

Bass Fishing: Although the bass fishing season will not be open for several more weeks, we saw 3 fishing parties casting their lines along the shoreline. Everyone should know that if an adult bass is distracted from its nest for even a few minutes, all of its eggs or small fry can be eaten within a minute or two by waiting predators.

Navigational Marker Buoys: One of the most important programs carried out by the White Lake Property Owners Association (WLPOA) is the placement, by volunteers, of dozens of shoal and rock markers in all parts of the lake. This program is expensive because of the cost of the markers and the insurance policy required. The WLPOA needs your support to carry out this program. If you are not already a member, please log on to www.wlpoa.ca and join. Dues are only \$30/year.

Forest Fire: Yesterday afternoon, while driving the Wabalac Road on the way to the cottage one of us (Conrad Gregoire) came upon a forest fire in the making. Wabalac Road is located on the western shore of the lake and is accessed via Rt 511.

The fire resulted from a tree falling over and breaking hydro lines. When Conrad arrived on the scene, the fire had spread to within 30 metres of a cottage and reached the edge of the road. The fire covered an area of about 1500 square feet. 911 was called for help.

Within 10 minutes a firefighter arrived to assess the situation in advance of the arrival of fire trucks. Ten minutes later a Hydro One vehicle arrived to turn the power off of the downed lines. In all it took about 35 minutes for the fire trucks to arrive and put the fire out. At that point the fire was getting bigger and beginning to climb to the tree tops. The attached photo shows flames rapidly rising up a live birch tree reaching adjacent white pine trees.

Many thanks and kudos to the Middleville and Tatlock (Lanark Highlands) firefighters and the Hydro One crew that repaired the line and restored power by early evening.

White Lake Checkup: June 16, 2026

June 16 was our third sampling outing of 2026. It was a beautiful sunny day with some clouds and moderate winds. We visited nine sampling sites (using GPS) and measured water temperatures, water clarity and water depth at the Waba Creek dam. Water samples were also taken for analysis for phosphorus, calcium, sulphate, and chloride concentrations. These samples were mailed to the Ministry of the Environment Labs for processing. Also collected were plankton samples using a specialized net. These samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 20.5°C. This was nearly one degree higher than it was at this time last year (19.6°C). In the shallower parts, the temperature was about the same at 20.1°C. Water temperatures did not vary by more than about 1°C across the lake.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as a Secchi depth was 4.1 metres which was 1.7 meters less (clear) than last year. Secchi depth ranged from 3.7 metres in Three Mile Bay to 4.4 metres in the deepest parts of the lake near Pickerel Bay. The decrease in water clarity may be due to residual amounts of algae remaining from a very recent algal bloom.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 150.0 cm, (152 cm in 2025) as compared to the target depth of 146.3 cm.

Algal Bloom: On June 6 White Lake experienced a lake-wide blue-green algal bloom. The alga was identified microscopically as *Anabaena* blue-green algae. This alga can produce toxins harmful to fish, pets and humans. The lake community was informed of the bloom via mailing lists and Facebook postings. The bloom lasted about 5 days and currently is nearly completely dissipated. If you would like to learn more about algal blooms in White Lake, please download our updated report on algal blooms in White Lake at: http://wlpp.ca/linked/white_lake_algal_blooms_1860_to_2025.pdf

Pollen Storm: The annual pollen storm is over. The pollen storm occurred at about the same time the lake was experiencing an algal bloom. For many, it made it difficult to decide if the material floating along their shoreline was algae or pollen. This is when a microscope comes in handy. We use it on a regular basis to identify any material floating in or on the lake. For example, it was easy to identify the pollen as pine pollen because these pollen grains have three lobes arranged look like 'Micky Mouse's head'.

Our 2021 Environment Bullen on pollen storms can be downloaded at: https://wlpp.ca/linked/pollen_storm.pdf.

White Lake Checkup: June 28, 2026

The morning of June 28th was absolutely beautiful on White Lake. It was warm with clear skies and virtually no wind. We visited our nine sampling sites (using GPS), and measured water temperatures, water clarity, and collected plankton samples for later analysis using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 23.5°C which was one half of a degree warmer than it was at this time last year. In the shallower parts, the temperature was slightly higher at 24.6°C.

Please note that we measure water temperatures away from shorelines and at a depth corresponding to the Secchi depth which is about 4 metres. Water temperatures at the shoreline can be many degrees higher especially if there is no wind to help mix lake waters.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as a Secchi depth was 4.6 metres, which was one half of a metre greater (clearer) than it was this time last year. With a Secchi depth of 4.6 metres, sunlight can reach a depth of 9.2 metres, which is slightly higher than the maximum depth of White Lake (9.1 metres).

Water Depth: The depth of the lake measured on the gauge at the dam was 157.8 cm as compared to the target depth of 141.3 cm. This means that the lake was 16.5 cm higher than planned. Last year at this time, the lake was 9.7 cm deeper.

White Lake Checkup: July 14, 2026

The early morning of July 14th this year was hot. Anyone up at sunrise would have been struck by how the entire landscape was orange in colour. Why? Well, for spectroscopists (like Conrad) the orange colour is directly related to why the sky is blue at midday. If you are curious, Google Rayleigh Scattering or simply ask ChatGPT – Why is the sky blue?

One thing for sure: forest fire smoke blanketed the lake. (See <https://wlpp.ca/linked/smoke.pdf> for more information). That did not deter us from visiting our nine sampling sites (using GPS). We measured water temperatures, water clarity and water depth at the Waba Creek dam. Water samples were also taken for analysis of phosphorus, calcium and chloride. These samples were mailed to the Ministry of the Environment Labs for processing. Also collected were plankton samples using a specialized net. These samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 25.5°C, the same as this time last year (25.6°C). In the shallower parts, the temperature was about one the same at 26.0°C.

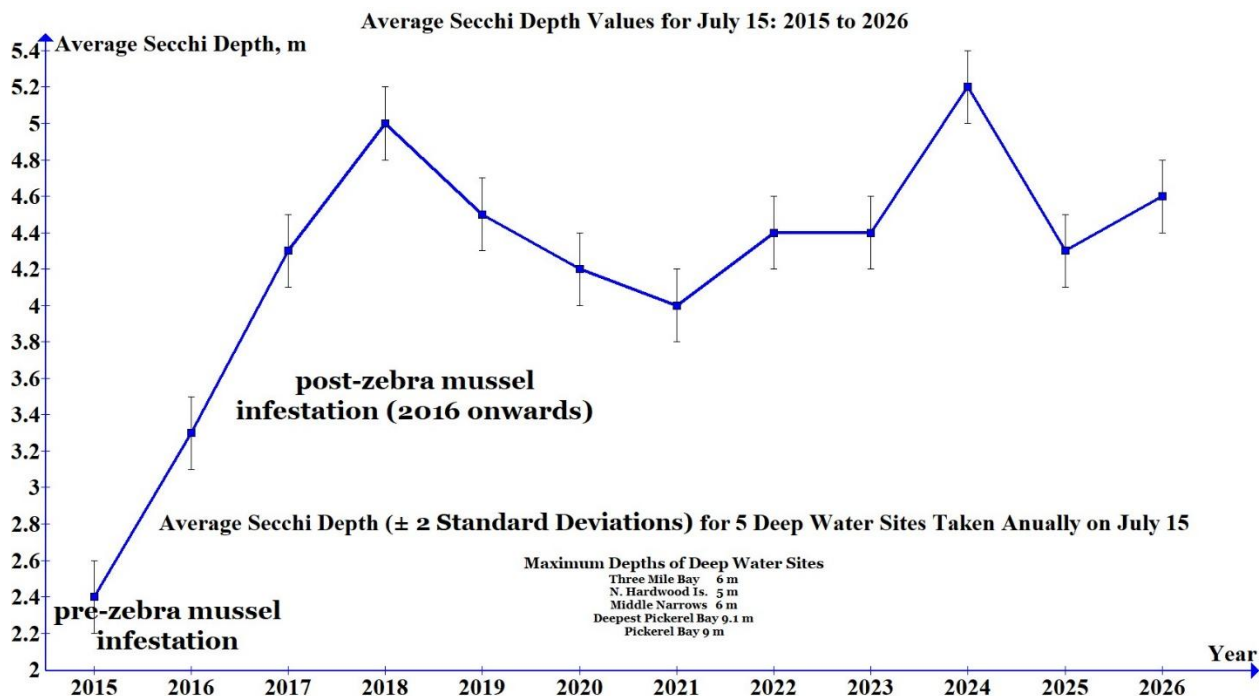
Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi depth was 4.6 metres which was 0.3 metres more (clear) than last year. Water clarity ranged from 4.0 to 5.2 in the deeper sampling sites.

For those interested in graphs, the attached figure shows the average Secchi depth reading starting in 2015 to the present. Once zebra mussels took hold in White Lake, the water clarity increased by nearly a factor of two. Since that time to the present, water clarity has changed, but only moderately.

The increased water clarity is a result of the feeding habits of the hundreds of millions of zebra mussels in White Lake; each capable of filtering 1 litre of lake water per day. We calculate that the volume of the entire lake can be filtered in about 2 months' time.

Increased water clarity means more light to encourage the growth of aquatic plants, aka weeds. Zebra mussels excrete (poop!) nutrients, such as phosphorus, in a form that encourages not only weed growth, but also algal blooms, which we have seen annually for the last 12 years. Sadly, increased water clarity in White Lake is not overall a good thing.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 144 cm as compared to the target depth of 140 cm; four cm higher than planned by the Ministry of the Environment.



White Lake Checkup: August 4, 2026

After days of heavy rain which saw more than 110 mm of rain fall on White Lake, August 4th brought us a beautiful sunny day. There was no wind over the lake as we set out for our 6th lake sampling run of the summer. We visited nine sampling sites on White Lake (using GPS) and measured water temperatures, water clarity and water depth at the Waba Creek dam. We also collected plankton samples using a specialized net. These samples are to be analyzed using a microscope in order to identify the algae and plankton in lake water.

Water Temperature: The average water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 22.7°C. Last year on this date, the water temperature was significantly warmer at 25.0°C. In Hayes Bay, the water temperature was 24.3°C; the hotspot.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as a Secchi depth was 3.6 metres, which was 0.2 metres lower (less clear water) than that measured in 2025.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 153.6 cm as compared to the target depth of 137.2 cm. Because of the recent heavy rains, the water level was 16.4 cm higher than planned on the so-called rule chart for the dam.

White Lake Checkup: August 16, 2026

August 16 marked the 7th water sampling session of the year. It was a beautiful day on the lake. It was partially sunny with winds of about 5 km/h. We visited nine sampling sites (using GPS) and measured water temperatures, water clarity and water depth at the Waba Creek dam. Water samples were also taken for analysis of phosphorus, calcium and chloride. These samples were mailed to the Ministry of the Environment Labs for processing. Also collected were plankton samples using a specialized net. These samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 23.7°C, about 1.5 degrees cooler than last year at this time. In the shallower parts, the temperature was about the same at 23.9°C.

Please note that we measure water temperatures away from shorelines and at a depth corresponding to the Secchi depth which is about 4 to 5 metres. Water temperatures at the shoreline can be several degrees higher especially if there is no wind to help mix lake waters.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi depth was 5.0 metres which was 0.5 metres more (clear) than last year on this date. Water clarity ranged from 4.5 to 5.8 at the deeper sampling sites. This indicates that biological activity varied considerably in different parts of the lake. The clearest water was found in the deepest water opposite Pickerel Bay.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 150.0 cm as compared to the target depth of 131.1 cm; that's 19.1 cm higher than historical water depths on this date. Last year at this time, the water depth was 130 cm.

Tape Grass: During this time of year, large mats of tape grass, also known as eel grass, can be found floating on the lake. During our sample run, we noticed many mats of floating tape grass primarily in the northern part of the lake near the entrance to the Village Basin. To learn more about tape grass and how it forms floating mats, please read the Environment Bulletin entitled 'Tape Grass':

https://wlpp.ca/linked/tape_grass_env_bulletin.pdf

White Lake Checkup: August 31, 2026

The morning of August 31th on White Lake was foggy and cloudy. The lake was calm when we set out for our 8th water sampling run of the year (three more to go!). We collected plankton samples at five of our 9 sampling sites as well as measured water clarity (Secchi Depth) and temperature at all sites. Plankton samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 22.0°C. The temperature last year at this time was cooler at 20.2°C. The water temperature in the shallower parts of the lake was 20.4°C indicating a cooling trend; Fall is coming!

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi Depth ranged from 4.3 to 4.5 metres in different parts of the lake and averaged 4.4 metres. Last year at this time, water clarity was an average of 5.0 metres; about 0.6 metres clearer than today. This may indicate increased biological activity.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 137.7 cm as compared to the target depth of 128 cm. This is 9.6 centimetres higher than called for in the water depth plan for the lake. Last year, the water depth at this time was 124 cm.

Algal Blooms: During the past week we have received and investigated two reports of possible algal blooms. Both of these blooms were localized over a small area. One was a harmless green alga and the other was a blue-green algal bloom. At this time, it may be that the lake is close to experiencing a more extensive algal bloom depending on weather conditions. We will continue to monitor the lake.

White Lake Checkup: September 14, 2026

Today we completed our 9th (of 11) water sampling run of the year. Skies were partly cloudy with air temperatures ranging from 15 to 17 °C. It was a cool ride, especially when travelling at 45 km/hr on choppy water.

We collected water samples for phosphorus measurements as well as calcium, chloride and sulphate levels in the lake. We also collected plankton samples at each of our 9 sampling sites as well and measured water clarity (Secchi Depth) and temperature. Plankton samples were analyzed later using an optical microscope.

Water Temperature: The water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 21.0°C. The temperature last year at this time was close, at 20.0°C. The water temperature in the shallower parts of the lake was 19.7°C indicating a cooling trend in air temperatures.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi Depth ranged from 5.4 to 6.3 metres in different parts of the lake and averaged 5.8 metres. The highest water clarity was at the two deepest locations. Last year at this time, water clarity was an average of 5.4 metres.

Water Depth: One parameter that is very different this year when compared to last year is the depth of the lake. The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge at the dam was 131.8 cm as compared to the target depth of 122 cm. Last year at this time, the depth of the lake was 118 cm. This means that the lake is currently 14 cm higher than it was last year on this date. Recent measurements show that the lake is currently losing about 1 cm of water per day.

White Lake Checkup: October 3, 2026

For our 10th sampling run of the year, we were favoured with a beautiful sunny morning. The fall colours were spectacular all around the lake. There was no wind to speak of. One more sampling expedition to go in mid-October! This time we collected plankton samples and took temperature and water clarity measurements.

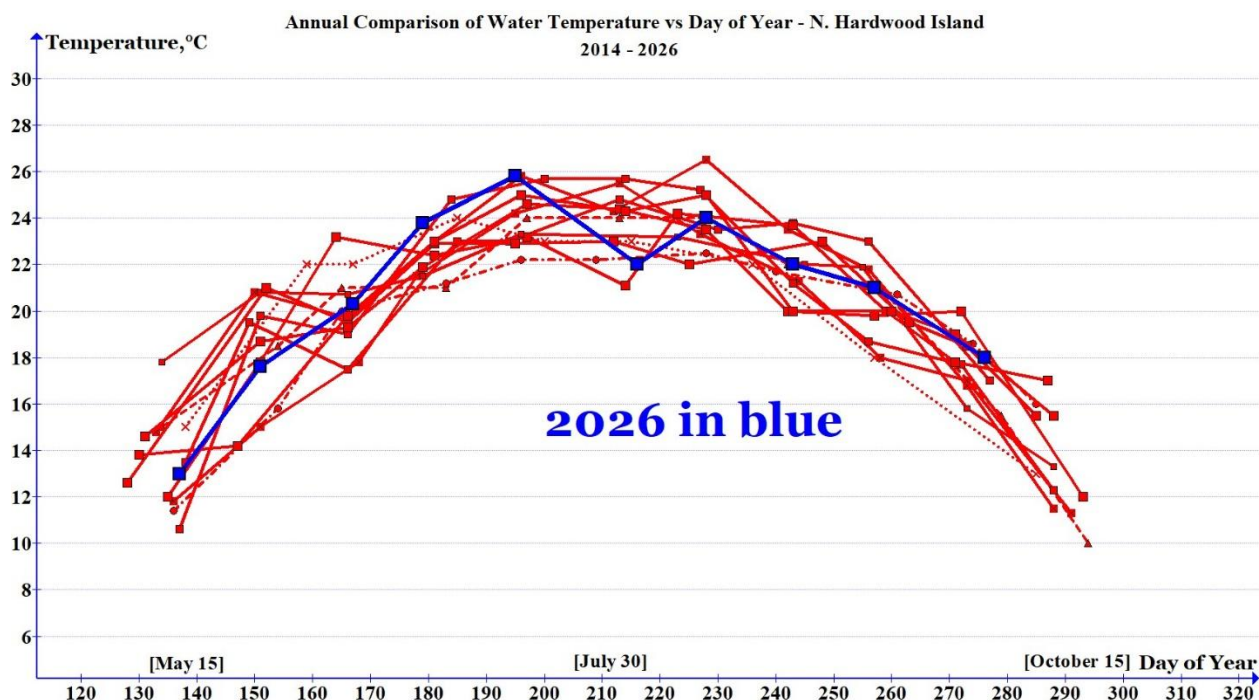
Water Temperature: The average water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 18.0°C as compared to a temperature of 19.2 °C recorded on the same date in 2025. The temperature taken in the shallow parts of the lake was 17.1 °C, the same temperature recorded in 2025. Water temperatures are highly dependent on local weather. The slightly lower water temperatures in the shallow parts of the lake indicates a cooling trend since shallow areas react more quickly to changes in atmospheric temperatures.

Once again, for those of you who appreciate graphs, we have one for you. The attached graph shows water temperatures measured at one deep water site over the past 13 years. The bold blue line is data for 2026. For most of the summer, water temperatures were middle-of-the-

road as compared to historical data, especially in the spring and late summer. During the June, water temperatures were generally on the high side. These trends are, of course, related to local weather conditions as would be expected for any shallow lake like White Lake.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi depth was 5.4 metres, down from 6.6 metres in 2025 and about the same as 2025 at 5.3 metres. The measured Secchi depth multiplied by 2 is the depth to which sunlight penetrates the lake water. The maximum depth of White Lake is 9.1 metres. Clearly, a Secchi depth of 5.4 metres indicates that sunlight can reach the bottom of the deepest parts of the lake.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge on the Waba Creek dam was 122.7 cm as compared to the target depth of 115.9 cm. This time last year, the depth was 115.9 cm. This depth is still 6.8 cm greater than planned. The depths cited in these Checkups are in centimetres and correspond to the water level above the sill of the dam structure at White Lake Village.



White Lake Checkup: October 15, 2026

October 15 marked our last and 11th water sampling outing for 2026. After days of overcast skies and rain it was great to have a beautiful sunny day to complete our work. As expected, it was cold especially travelling 40 km in an open boat.

In total, during 2026, we collected 221 water samples to be analyzed by the Ministry of the Environment's Lake Partner Program, collected 44 plankton samples and took two hundred temperature and water clarity measurements. We also kept track and documented water levels and counted both loon and cormorant populations. Results of these counts will be presented in our Annual Report, yet to be written.

Water Temperature: The average water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 14.0°C as compared to a temperature of 15.8 °C recorded on the same date in 2025. The average temperature of the shallower parts of the lake was 11.5°C indicating a cooling trend. Water temperatures in a shallow lake like White Lake are very weather dependent.

Water Clarity: Water clarity as expressed as the Secchi depth was 6.5 metres, down from 7.3 metres in 2025. Note that a Secchi depth could only be read at two (of nine) sites in the deepest part of the lake. The rest of the sites were clear to the bottom of the lake.

Water Depth: The depth of the lake as measured at the gauge on the Waba Creek dam was 121.8 cm as compared to the target depth of 107 cm. The lake level was then 14.8 cm higher than called for in the plan. Last year, the water depth on October 15 was 110.5 cm. On October 9th, the water depth was lower at 119.6 cm. Significant rain caused the lake level to rise.

The lake depth will gradually be lowered until 106.7 cm is reached, where it will stay throughout the winter months. The depths cited in these Checkups are in centimetres and correspond to the water level above the sill of the dam structure at White Lake Village.

Attached is a graph showing water depth measurements taken from 2017 to 2026. The blue line shows the target depths that the Ministry of the Environment and Forestry try to achieve. The black line indicates depths measured in 2026. The red dots are measurements made from 2017 to 2025. The green line is the curve for 2025 showing a more typical result from year to year.

The graph shows that historically, water levels were often higher in the spring and were close to the planned depth during the summer months and in the fall. The 2026 data shows that for this year, water depths were consistently high starting in late July.

