

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing data collected from **Pratt Pond, New Ipswich**, the program coordinators have made the following observations and recommendations.

We congratulate your group for sampling your pond **twice** this summer. However, we encourage your monitoring group to sample **additional** times each summer. Typically, we recommend that monitoring groups sample **three times** per summer (once in **June, July, and August**). We understand that the number of sampling events you decide to conduct per summer will depend upon volunteer availability, and your monitoring group's goals and funding availability. However, with a limited amount of data it is difficult to determine accurate and representative water quality trends. Since weather patterns and activity in the watershed can change throughout the summer, from year to year, and even from hour to hour during a rain event, it is a good idea to sample the pond at least once per month during the summer.

If you are having difficulty finding volunteers to help sample or to travel to one of the laboratories, please call the VLAP Coordinator and DES will help you work out an arrangement.

FIGURE INTERPRETATION

- **Figure 1 and Table 1:** Figure 1 in Appendix A shows the historical and current year chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column. Table 1 in Appendix B lists the maximum, minimum, and mean concentration for each sampling year that the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Chlorophyll-a, a pigment found in plants, is an indicator of the algal abundance. Algae are typically microscopic plants that are naturally occurring in lake ecosystems and contain chlorophyll-a. The chlorophyll-a concentration measured in the water gives biologists an estimation of the algal concentration or lake productivity. **The median summer chlorophyll-a concentration for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 4.58 mg/m³.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the chlorophyll-a concentration **was 2.28 mg/m³ in July**.

No deep spot samples were collected in **September** due to a broken chain. We apologize for any inconvenience.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the **2007** chlorophyll-a mean is ***much less than*** the state median and the similar lake median. For more information on the similar lake median, refer to Appendix F.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line (the bottom graph) shows a ***stable*** in-lake chlorophyll-a trend since monitoring began. Specifically the mean chlorophyll concentration has ***remained approximately the same, ranging between 1.43 and 2.3 mg/m³ since year***.

Please keep in mind that this trend is based on limited data. As your group expands its sampling program to include additional events each year, we will be able to determine trends with more accuracy and confidence.

After 10 consecutive years of sample collection, we will be able to conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean chlorophyll-a concentration since monitoring began.

While algae are naturally present in all ponds, an excessive or increasing amount of any type is not welcomed. In freshwater ponds, phosphorus is the nutrient that algae typically depend upon for growth in New Hampshire lakes. Algal concentrations may increase as nonpoint sources of phosphorus from the watershed increase, or as in-lake phosphorus sources increase. Therefore, it is extremely important for volunteer monitors to continually educate all watershed residents about management practices that can be implemented to minimize phosphorus loading to surface waters.

- **Figure 2 and Tables 3a and 3b:** Figure 2 in Appendix A shows the historical and current year data for transparency with and without the use of a viewscope. Table 3a in Appendix B lists the maximum, minimum and mean transparency data without the use of a viewscope and Table 3b lists the maximum, minimum and mean transparency data with the use of a viewscope for each year that the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Volunteer monitors use the Secchi disk, a 20 cm disk with alternating black and white quadrants, to measure how far a person can see into

the water. Transparency, a measure of water clarity, can be affected by the amount of algae and sediment in the water, as well as the natural color of the water. **The median summer transparency for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 3.2 meters.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the non-viewscope in-lake transparency was **2.7 meters** in **July**.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the **2007** mean non-viewscope transparency is **slightly less than** the state median and is **slightly greater than** the similar lake median. Please refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line (the bottom graph) shows a **relatively stable** trend for in-lake non-viewscope transparency. Specifically, the transparency has **remained relatively stable ranging between approximately 2.7 and 3.5 meters** since monitoring began in **2002**.

Please keep in mind that this trend is based on limited data. As your group expands its sampling program to include additional events each year, we will be able to determine trends with more accuracy and confidence.

Again, please keep in mind that this trend is based on only **six** years of data. As previously discussed, after 10 consecutive years of sample collection, we will be able to conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean transparency since monitoring began.

- **Figure 3 and Table 8:** The graphs in Figure 3 in Appendix A show the amount of epilimnetic (upper layer) phosphorus and hypolimnetic (lower layer) phosphorus; the inset graphs show current year data. Table 8 in Appendix B lists the annual maximum, minimum, and median concentration for each deep spot layer and each tributary since the pond has been sampled through VLAP.

Phosphorus is typically the limiting nutrient for vascular plant and algae growth in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds. Excessive phosphorus in a lake/pond can lead to increased plant and algal growth over time. **The median summer total phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 12 ug/L. The median summer phosphorus concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer) is 14 ug/L.**

The current year data for the epilimnion (the top inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration was **6.8 ug/L** in **July**.

The historical data show that the **2007** mean epilimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***much less than*** the state median and the similar lake median. Refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

The current year data for the hypolimnion (the bottom inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration was **6.9 ug/L** in **July**.

The historical data show that the **2007** mean hypolimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***much less than*** the state median and the similar lake median. Please refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line for the epilimnion and hypolimnion shows a ***decreasing*** phosphorus trend since monitoring began. Specifically the mean annual epilimnetic and hypolimnetic phosphorus concentration has ***improved*** since monitoring began in **2002**.

Please keep in mind that these trends are based on limited data. As your group expands its sampling program to include additional events each year, we will be able to determine trends with more accuracy and confidence.

As discussed previously, after 10 consecutive years of sample collection, we will be able to conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean phosphorus concentration since monitoring began.

One of the most important approaches to reducing and preventing phosphorus loading to a waterbody is to continually educate watershed residents about the watershed sources of phosphorus and how excessive phosphorus loading can negatively affect the ecology and the recreational, economical, and ecological value of lakes and ponds.

TABLE INTERPRETATION

➤ **Table 2: Phytoplankton**

Table 2 in Appendix B lists the current and historical phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the pond. Specifically, this table lists the three most dominant phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the sample and their relative abundance in the sample.

The dominant phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the **July** sample were ***Staurastrum (Greens)***, and ***Dinobryon (Golden-Browns)***.

Phytoplankton populations undergo a natural succession during the growing season. Please refer to the “Biological Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding seasonal plankton succession. Diatoms and golden-brown algae populations are typical in New Hampshire’s less productive lakes and ponds.

➤ **Table 4: pH**

Table 4 in Appendix B presents the in-lake and tributary current year and historical pH data.

pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (basic). pH is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. A pH below 6.0 typically limits the growth and reproduction of fish. A pH between 6.0 and 7.0 is ideal for fish. The median pH value for the epilimnion (upper layer) in New Hampshire’s lakes and ponds is **6.6**, which indicates that the state surface waters are slightly acidic. For a more detailed explanation regarding pH, please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report.

The mean pH at the deep spot this year ranged from **5.98** in the hypolimnion to **6.11** in the epilimnion, which means that the water is ***slightly acidic***.

It is important to point out that the hypolimnetic (lower layer) pH was ***lower (more acidic)*** than in the epilimnion (upper layer). This increase in acidity near the pond bottom is likely due to the decomposition of organic matter and the release of acidic by-products into the water column.

Due to the state’s abundance of granite bedrock in the state and acid deposition received from snowmelt, rainfall, and atmospheric particulates, there is little that can be feasibly done to effectively increase pond pH.

➤ **Table 5: Acid Neutralizing Capacity**

Table 5 in Appendix B presents the current year and historical epilimnetic ANC for each year the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Buffering capacity (ANC) describes the ability of a solution to resist changes in pH by neutralizing the acidic input. The median ANC value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **4.8 mg/L**, which indicates that many lakes and ponds in the state are at least "moderately vulnerable" to acidic inputs. For a more detailed explanation about ANC, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean acid neutralizing capacity (ANC) of the epilimnion (upper layer) was **0.7 mg/L**, which is *much less than* the state median. In addition, this indicates that the pond is *extremely vulnerable* to acidic inputs.

➤ **Table 6: Conductivity**

Table 6 in Appendix B presents the current and historical conductivity values for tributaries and in-lake data. Conductivity is the numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electric current, which is determined by the number of negatively charged ions from metals, salts, and minerals in the water column. The median conductivity value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **38.4 uMhos/cm**. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean annual epilimnetic conductivity at the deep spot this year was **19.17 uMhos/cm**, which is *much less than* the state median.

The conductivity in the pond is relatively *stable* and *low*. Typically conductivity levels greater than 100 uMhos/cm indicate the influence of pollutant sources associated with human activities. These sources include septic system leachate, agricultural runoff, and road runoff which contains road salt during the spring snow-melt. We hope this trend continues!

➤ **Table 8: Total Phosphorus**

Table 8 in Appendix B presents the current year and historical total phosphorus data for in-lake and tributary stations. Phosphorus is the nutrient that limits the algae's ability to grow and reproduce. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The phosphorus concentration in the **tributaries** was *relatively low* this year, which is good news. However, we recommend that your monitoring group sample the major tributaries to the pond during snow-melt and periodically during rainstorms to determine if the phosphorus concentration is *elevated* in the tributaries during these times. Typically, the majority of nutrient loading to a pond occurs in

the spring during snow-melt and during intense rainstorms that cause soil erosion and surface runoff and within the watershed.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling and stream surveys, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report special topic article, which is posted on the VLAP website at http://www.des.nh.gov/wmb/vlap/2002/documents/Appndxd_monitoring.pdf, or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 9 and Table 10: Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Data**

Table 9 in Appendix B shows the dissolved oxygen/temperature profile(s) collected during **2007**. Table 10 in Appendix B shows the historical and current year dissolved oxygen concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer). The presence of sufficient amounts of dissolved oxygen in the water column is vital to fish and amphibians and bottom-dwelling organisms. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The dissolved oxygen concentration was **high** at all deep spot depths sampled in the pond on the **July** sampling event. Typically, shallow lakes and ponds that are not deep enough to stratify into more than one or two thermal layers will have relatively high amounts of oxygen at all depths. This is due to continual lake mixing and diffusion of oxygen into the bottom waters induced by wind and wave action.

➤ **Table 11: Turbidity**

Table 11 in Appendix B lists the current year and historical data for in-lake and tributary turbidity. Turbidity in the water is caused by suspended matter, such as clay, silt, and algae. Water clarity is strongly influenced by turbidity. Please refer to the “Other Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The tributary and deep spot turbidity was **relatively low** this year, which is good news.

However, we recommend that your group sample the pond and any surface water runoff areas during significant rain events to determine if stormwater runoff contributes turbidity and phosphorus to the pond.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report special topic article, which is posted on the VLAP website at http://www.des.nh.gov/wmb/vlap/2002/documents/Appndxd_monitoring.pdf, or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 12: Bacteria (*E. coli*)**

Table 12 in Appendix B lists the current year and historical data for bacteria (*E. coli*) testing. *E. coli* is a normal bacterium found in the large intestine of humans and other warm-blooded animals. *E. coli* is used as an indicator organism because it is easily cultured and its presence in the water, in defined amounts, indicates that sewage **may** be present. If sewage is present in the water, potentially harmful disease-causing organisms **may** also be present.

The **Middle West Inlet** *E. coli* concentration was ***slightly elevated*** on the **September** sampling event. However, the concentration of **50** counts per 100 mL ***was not greater than*** the state standard of 88 counts per 100 mL for designated public beaches.

The **North West Cove** *E. coli* concentration was ***elevated*** on the **September** sampling event. Specifically, the result of **110** counts per 100 mL ***was greater than*** the state standard of 88 counts per 100 mL for designated public beaches.

The **South Inlet** *E. coli* was ***elevated*** on the **September** sampling event. However, the concentration of **250** counts per 100 mL ***was not greater than*** the state standard of 406 counts per 100 mL for recreational waters that are not designated public beaches.

Weather records indicate approximated **1.0 inch** of rainfall **24 hours** prior to sampling. It is likely that the storm event washed bacteria laden stormwater into the tributaries.

We recommend that your group continue *E. coli* sampling at these station next year. If the results continue to be ***elevated***, we will recommend that your group conduct a series of tests on a weekend during heavy beach use and also immediately after a rain event. This additional sampling may help us determine the source of the bacteria.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling and stream surveys, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report special topic article, which is posted on the VLAP website at http://www.des.nh.gov/wmb/vlap/2002/documents/Appndxd_monit_oring.pdf, or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 13: Chloride**

Table 13 in Appendix B lists the current year and the historical data for chloride sampling. The chloride ion (Cl⁻) is found naturally in some surfacewaters and groundwaters and in high concentrations in seawater. Research has shown that elevated chloride levels can be

toxic to freshwater aquatic life. In order to protect freshwater aquatic life in New Hampshire, the state has adopted **acute and chronic** chloride criteria of **860 and 230 mg/L** respectively. The chloride content in New Hampshire lakes is naturally low, generally less than 2 mg/L in surface waters located in remote areas away from habitation. Higher values are generally associated with salted highways and, to a lesser extent, with septic inputs. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

Chloride sampling was **not** conducted during **2007**.

➤ **Table 14: Current Year Biological and Chemical Raw Data**

Table 14 in Appendix B lists the most current sampling year results. Since the maximum, minimum, and annual mean values for each parameter are not shown on this table, this table displays the current year “raw,” meaning unprocessed, data. The results are sorted by station, depth, and then parameter.

➤ **Table 15: Station Table**

As of the spring of 2004, all historical and current year VLAP data are included in the DES Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD). To facilitate the transfer of VLAP data into the EMD, a new station identification system had to be developed. While volunteer monitoring groups can still use the sampling station names that they have used in the past and are most familiar with, an EMD station name also exists for each VLAP sampling location. Table 15 in Appendix B identifies what EMD station name corresponds to the station names you have used in the past and will continue to use in the future.

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

Annual Assessment Audit:

During the annual visit to your pond, the biologist conducted a sampling procedures assessment audit for your monitoring group. Specifically, the biologist observed the performance of your monitoring group and completed an assessment audit sheet to document the volunteer monitors’ ability to follow the proper field sampling procedures, as outlined in the VLAP Monitor’s Field Manual. This assessment is used to identify any aspects of sample collection in which volunteer monitors failed to follow proper procedures, and also provides an opportunity for the biologist to retrain the volunteer monitors as necessary. This will

ultimately ensure samples that the volunteer monitors collect are truly representative of actual lake and tributary conditions.

Overall, your monitoring group did an **excellent** job collecting samples on the annual biologist visit this year! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the proper field sampling procedures and there was no need for the biologist to provide additional training. Keep up the good work!

Sample Receipt Checklist:

Each time your monitoring group dropped off samples at the laboratory this summer, the laboratory staff completed a sample receipt checklist to assess and document if your group followed proper sampling techniques when collecting the samples. The purpose of the sample receipt checklist is to minimize, and hopefully eliminate, improper sampling techniques.

Overall, the sample receipt checklist showed that your monitoring group did a **very good** job when collecting samples this year! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the majority of the proper field sampling procedures when collecting and submitting samples to the laboratory. However, the laboratory did identify a few aspects of sample collection that your group could improve upon, as follows:

- **Complete sample sets:** Please remember to collect one “big white” bottle used for pH, ANC, turbidity, conductivity sampling, **and** one “small brown” bottle used for phosphorus sampling at each tributary and deep spot location on each sampling event. In addition, please collect a chlorophyll sample in the “big brown” bottle on each sampling event. Collecting a complete set of samples on each sampling event will allow us to better determine the quality of the pond.
- **Sample bottle volume:** Please fill each sample bottle up to the neck of the bottle where the bottle curves in. This will ensure that the laboratory staff will have enough sample water to conduct all of the necessary tests.

Please be careful to not overflow the small brown bottle used for phosphorus sampling since this bottle contains acid. If you do accidentally overflow the small brown bottle, please rinse your hands and the outside of the sample bottle and make a note of this on your field sampling sheet. The laboratory staff will put additional acid in the bottle in the laboratory to preserve the sample.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Acid Deposition Impacting New Hampshire's Ecosystems, DES fact sheet ARD-32, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/ard/ard-32.htm.

Best Management Practices to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution: A Guide for Citizens and Town Officials, DES Booklet WD-03-42, (603) 271-2975.

Best Management Practices for Well Drilling Operations, DES fact sheet WD-WSEB-21-4, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/ws/ws-21-4.htm.

Biodegradable Soaps and Water Quality, DES fact sheet BB-54, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-54.htm.

Canada Geese Facts and Management Options, DES fact sheet BB-53, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-53.htm.

Cyanobacteria in New Hampshire Waters Potential Dangers of Blue-Green Algae Blooms, DES fact sheet WMB-10, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/wmb/wmb-10.htm.

Erosion Control for Construction in the Protected Shoreland Buffer Zone, DES fact sheet WD-SP-1, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/sp/sp-1.htm.

Freshwater Jellyfish In New Hampshire, DES fact sheet WD-BB-5, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-51/htm.

Impacts of Development Upon Stormwater Runoff, DES fact sheet WD-WQE-7, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/wqe/wqe-7.htm.

IPM: An Alternative to Pesticides, DES fact sheet WD-SP-3, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/sp/sp-3.htm.

Iron Bacteria in Surface Water, DES fact sheet WD-BB-18, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-18.htm.

Lake Foam, DES fact sheet WD-BB-4, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-5.htm.

Lake Protection Tips: Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes, DES fact sheet WD-BB-9, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-9.htm.

Low Impact Development Hydrologic Analysis. Manual prepared by Prince George's County, Maryland, Department of Environmental Resources. July 1999. To access this document, visit

www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid_hydr.pdf or call the EPA Water Resource Center at (202) 566-1736.

Low Impact Development: Taking Steps to Protect New Hampshire's Surface Waters, DES fact sheet WD-WMB-16, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/wmb/wmb-17.htm.

Proper Lawn Care In the Protected Shoreland, The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, DES fact sheet WD-SP-2, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/sp/sp-2.htm.

Road Salt and Water Quality, DES fact sheet WD-WMB-4, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/wmb/wmb-4.htm.

Sand Dumping - Beach Construction, DES fact sheet WD-BB-15, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-15.htm.

Shorelands Under the Jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, DES fact sheet SP-4, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/sp/sp-4.htm.

Soil Erosion and Sediment Control on Construction Sites, DES fact sheet WQE-6, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/wqe/wqe-6.htm.

Swimmers Itch, DES fact sheet WD-BB-2, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-2.htm.

Through the Looking Glass: A Field Guide to Aquatic Plants, North American Lake Management Society, 1988, (608) 233-2836 or www.nalms.org.

Weed Watchers: An Association to Halt the Spread of Exotic Aquatic Plants, DES fact sheet WD-BB-4, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/bb/bb-4.htm.

Watershed Districts and Ordinances, DES fact sheet WD-WMB-16, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/wmb/wmb-16.htm.