

White Lake Checkup: October 15, 2025

October 15 marked our last and 11th water sampling outing for 2025. It was cold and windy and it was great to sit down to a bowl of hot soup after spending 2 hours on the lake.

In total, during 2025, 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.

Water Temperature: The average water temperature in the deeper parts of the lake was 15.8°C as compared to a temperature of 12.6 °C recorded on the same date in 2024. The temperature was 15.6°C in 2023. The average temperature of the shallower parts of the lake was 14.0°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 7.3 metres, up from 6.3 metres in 2023. Note that a Secchi depth could only be read at two 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 110.5 cm as compared to the target depth of 107 cm. The lake depth will continue to 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 2025. The blue line shows the target depths that the Ministry of the Environment, Forestry try to achieve. The black line indicates depths measured in 2025. The red dots are measurements made from 2017 to 2023.

The graph shows that historically for the most part, water levels were higher in the spring and were close to the planned depth during the summer months and in the fall. The 2025 data shows that for this year, water depths were within 10 cm of the planned depth. Water depths were either higher than planned in the early part of the summer and close to the mark during the remainder of the summer.

Cormorants: Four cormorants were spotted on the lake. These cormorants are likely transients on the way to warmer climes. Genuine snowbirds!

Blue-Green Algal Bloom: On October 14, a blue-green algal bloom was observed on White Lake. The extent of the bloom covered Three Mile Bay to the main water body and north to the edge of Pickerel Bay. The bloom was confined to the water column and only showed surface accumulation for about one kilometre along the western shore of White Lake.

We do not know how long the bloom was active, but with increased winds on the lake, the bloom was dissipated by the afternoon of October 15th.

Addendum: The blue-green algal bloom described above returned on October 16 once winds were calmed. We also know that on October 2nd, a significant blue-green algal bloom occurred in most of Pickerel Bay and into the main body of the lake north of the bay.

Algal blooms occur where and when conditions are right and so it is clear that these blooms can be observed at different parts of the lake at different times.

Compilation: Within the next few weeks, a compilation of all of the 2025 Checkups will be published in a single document. A notice will be sent out or posted on Facebook giving the link to the compilation document.

To learn more about White Lake please visit the White Lake Science website at: <https://wlpp.ca/>

Contact us at envwlpoa@gmail.com if you have questions or concerns or if you would like to be added to our emailing list and receive all of our reports, bulletins, and checkups.

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