

Water Transparency and Testing

Report prepared for NSOLA 2026 AGM

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General Update:

This Spring Claire and Tim have taken over the responsibility for water sampling and taking transparency readings from Keith. The 2025 water testing results have not been posted on the *Lake Partner Program* website yet, so here is a summary of our 2025/2026 field notes and the 2024 testing results.

We also looked back over the past decade, and the good news is that very little has changed over the years so we expect that the 2025 and 2026 results will be similar.

Water Transparency:

A Secchi disk (think black and white frisbee) is lowered into the water. Measurements are taken when the disk is last visible before it disappears from view. This helps us understand the clarity of the water. This is measured in the midpoint of the Scout Camp Bay as well as the midpoint of the lake between Birch Point and Otter Point.

Year	Water Transparency reading
2023	3.7m – 4.9m
2024	3.5m – 3.7m
2025	3.2m – 5.3m
2026 – May 21st	2.8m
2026 – July 1st	3.5m

The murkiness in May is likely because we had such a deep snowpack and a high volume of Spring runoff in April and May. Things are looking great right now.

Water Testing:

Water samples are collected at the same locations as the Secchi disk testing and sent to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Year	North Otter Lake Average	North Otter Lake range	Sydenham Lake
2024			
Sulphate	3.6	3.0-4.3	4.7-6.9
Chloride	3.7	3.2-4.7	6.3-10.0
Calcium	13	10.5-14	27-30
Phosphorus	7.3	6.5-17	

The key result we found interesting is the difference in the Calcium level. We know there are zebra mussels in Sydenham Lake and one of the reasons is likely because the higher calcium level supports their health.

If there are any questions, please let us know and we will do our best to answer them. And we will make sure to keep checking for the 2025 water transparency results and share them with the NSOLA Board when they are available.

Cormorant concern

We have been noticing a Cormorant. It seems to be roosting regularly in a tree on the west shore of the lake across from Keith and Anita's.

It is concerning. If it's nesting, the population could increase quickly. We've seen the devastation that even a small group of cormorants can do in the islands off Kingston.

It feels important to bring this to people's attention. Maybe others have seen it and or can watch for it. Monitoring feels like a good idea.

Thanks

Claire & Tim