



Connecticut Lake Watch

Field Quick Reference Guide

Water Clarity - Secchi Disk Depth Reading

Equipment List:

- 8-inch Secchi disk attached to a metered Line
- Clothespins or similar marking device
- Field thermometer
- Field datasheet and pencil (or use the Lake Observer mobile app)
- GPS unit, bathymetry map, and/or depth finder
- Boat anchor(s)
- Camera or smartphone (waterproof case is recommended)

General Reminders:

- Monitor sites weekly between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Inspect equipment for damage; make sure the disk is securely attached!
- Anchor your boat to prevent drifting; do not monitor if strong winds or currents cause the line to drift.
- Remove sunglasses and hats before monitoring
- Measure secchi disk depth from the shady side of the boat

Instructions:

Step 1: Navigate to your sampling site using a GPS unit, depth finder and/or field map. Securely anchor your boat and wait for the boat to settle into its orientation. If needed, set a second anchor to prevent drifting.

Step 2: Lean over the shady side of the boat and lower the disk into the water until it disappears. Slowly raise the disk back up until just visible, then lower again to the point of just disappearing. Hold there and mark the line at the water surface with a clothespin. Record this value (to the nearest cm) on the datasheet.

- Make sure the disk lowers straight down. If not, add additional weight or pull the line close to the boat and take the reading quickly.
- If the disk was on the bottom (i.e., you could see to the lake floor), note this on the datasheet and skip to step 4.

Step 3: Slowly lower the disk in the water until it reaches the bottom. Mark the metered line at the water surface with a clothespin. Record this total depth value (to nearest cm) on the datasheet.

Step 4: Use a field thermometer to measure the temperature of the air; record this on the datasheet.

Step 5: Use a field thermometer to measure the temperature of the water from the sunny side of the boat; record this on the datasheet.

Step 6: Record weather and surface water conditions on the datasheet in the space provided. Take photographs of any unusual water quality conditions.