

Our association has been part of the MLA 's water Quality Initiative program since 2005. This program covers various locations on the big three plus 16 smaller lakes. In 2017, over 190 sites were tested by over 100 volunteers, all using the exact same test protocols. According to the MLA, this is the most comprehensive program of any lake association in Canada.

Our part of the program last year consisted of 15 phosphorus tests on 4 locations, 9 e coli tests to measure the nasty stuff and 9 total coliforms tests for general bacteria, on 3 locations. We also did 4 sechi disc tests on 4 locations and 16 water temperature tests on 4 locations.

Results continue to show our water is of consistently high quality.

Secchi disk readings for water clarity showed a depth of 6 meters, consistent with results going back to 2012.

Bacteria and e coli tests show no concern, with results well within the provincial and Muskoka Lakes Association guidelines.

Last year I reported that ours and most of the program sites had a phosphorus reduction from prior year, and this year I am reporting a flip side of those results. Our 2017 results were up slightly from 2016, which is consistent with a general increase across most of the program.

It is generally acknowledged that the majority of phosphorus loading of a lake is due to natural causes, and swings such as we have seen in the past 3 years seem to support that.

Our annual phosphorus average over the whole season was 6.3. For reference our threshold is 4.79.

Comparing phosphorus results across the program, I looked at the data for the 55 main sites and found that only 34 have been assigned thresholds...and those range from 3.5 main lake Joseph, to 28.4 at Brandy lake. Our 4.8 is lower than 27 other sites.

Of the 25 sites where a yearly average was calculated, we were lower than 17 of them. The annual deepwater test, which is arguably the most important, saw us better than 30 of 43 .

All our results will soon be posted on our web site, and the overall program results can be found on the MLA site.

This year's program is the same as last years...we are doing tests on 4 weekends and at 4 sites. Work is also ongoing in the MLA this year to review thresholds. Consideration will be given to nearshore natural heritage conditions, existing land use, as well as upcoming changes to the District water quality threshold.

I'll conclude by thanking everyone for doing their part to keep our lake true to its name. Everyone has a role to play with good shoreline vegetation practices, properly constructed and maintained septic systems, and minimizing the use of phosphate detergents.