



CSLAP News and Thank You!

Hi Everyone,

Just a note as we wind down the season to thank each and every one of you for your commitment to the program this year. Back in March, we didn't even know whether or not we would have a program or volunteers able to conduct sampling. Here we are now with many of you approaching the last sampling round. Our volunteers are the best!

Reminder - September 30th is the last day to collect samples, and we need all of the bottles to be received by the lab by Friday October 2nd.

We had over 100 responses to the CSLAP Survey so far, and you can still find the link on our website: www.nysfola.org (scroll down through the home page posts). Based on that, here are a few answers to comments we received from the survey:

1. **E Coli /Total Coliform sampling** - While we know it's important, it can't be done as part of CSLAP. Why not? Bacteria samples must be collected and analyzed within a very short time period (aka they have very short "holding times"). So, there's no way for us to get them to the lab and analyzed within that window as part of CSLAP. The samples also have strict temperature requirements that may be compromised by shipping them rather than transporting them directly to the lab. If you want to conduct bacterial sampling, you should contact an ELAP certified laboratory near your lake. <https://www.wadsworth.org/regulatory/elap>
2. **Aquatic Plant ID** - You are always welcome to submit photos of plants that you need to have identified, and many of you have done so. Please be sure to send close ups of all the various parts—leaves, whorls, roots, stems (preferably on a white background). You can also submit the entire plant —though be warned that they are usually pretty degraded by the time we receive them. NYSFOLA and DEC put together an *Aquatic Plant Surveillance Guide* for our volunteers to help you. It's less technical than a formal point-intercept rake toss method. <https://nysfola.org/cslap-aquatic-plant-survey/>. We also recommend "Through the Looking Glass" <https://nysfola.org/books/> (available for \$30 plus S&H) to assist you with identification.
3. **Aquatic animals?** Please, only send a picture. We have received snails, fish, clams and even frozen salamanders in the CSLAP coolers, but we really prefer close up photos.
3. **Road Salt sampling** - We do sample for chloride as part of CSLAP, and we have changed that to include hypolimnion samples based on new research showing that it tends to sink. So, it is covered.
4. **Dissolved Oxygen Profiles/Ice On-Off Data** - Dissolved oxygen probes are simply too expensive and too difficult to calibrate and maintain for the majority of our volunteers. However, our "seasoned" veterans, who have the resources, are welcome to purchase the equipment, collect the information, and include it with their online data entries at www.cslapdata.org. You can report this under "non-CSLAP data", and many lakes do. You can also report Ice On/Ice Off data here.
5. **Temperature Profiles** - Again, it comes down to equipment, but for those of you who want to buy a probe, feel free to submit the data. You can do this with the thermometer provided, but it means collecting a sample every meter, taking the temperature, and dumping the water out. So, if your lake is very deep, this will take awhile.

6. **Waiver Forms** - We know. They aren't our favorite part of the program either, but they aren't going away (especially with COVID-19 in circulation), and what you're seeing is the "softer" version of what the last legal review (2018) recommended. Because we can't supervise volunteers, or control what happens out on the lake, the waiver forms are required. Most of you are very safe, but there are "stories" that make us very glad we have them. Fortunately, we haven't had to use them for anything other than contact information in 35+ years. Also, because NYS law states that parents cannot waive the rights of their minor children (primarily because of sports related injury lawsuits), all volunteers must now be 18 years of age or older.
7. **Reports** - We know everyone would like them sooner, but DEC requires that the entire dataset undergo a vigorous quality assurance review before it becomes final. This means that while most of us have wrapped up the season, the staff at UFI is conducting the data review, checking values against historic data, rerunning some samples, and double checking for errors. (This is how they found the issue with the TP samples last year.) We usually receive the final data around Thanksgiving-ish (sometimes more like Christmas). At that time, Stephanie prepares the dataset and starts generating reports —when she can fit that in among all of her other job duties at DEC. We do send out the *field data* summaries as soon as the season ends. You can also look at these online at www.cslapdata.org at any time during the season by clicking on "View in Season Report". This will compare your current field data (Secchi, temperature, etc.) to prior years. It's obviously not very helpful for lakes that are new to the program, but it can be quite useful for those of you with a long term data set in the system. Also, some of you said the reports were too technical, and some of you said they were oversimplified. So for those of you who find them hard to understand, please feel free to reach out to us for additional information. If you want more in-depth information, you can request the raw data (after it has been finalized). Previous surveys indicated that most people didn't want it in the reports. Also, please note that all of the CSLAP reports are on NYSFOLA's website, but they are not all on DEC's website. If you really want your newest (2019) and/or oldest reports, use the NYSFOLA website: <https://nysfola.org/cslap-report-search/>.
8. **Fish Studies** - There's not really a good way to do fish studies as part of CSLAP, but let us know if this is something you're interested in. Perhaps we can help you find a way to make this happen. Local universities are a potential source of assistance.
9. **Scorecards** - 93% of you found them useful. That was an important piece of information. Thank you.
10. **Lake Association Blog or Other Communication Mechanism** - Many of you wanted a way to communicate with other lake associations. Interestingly enough, we had a NYSFOLA membership blog set up on our old website, and no one ever used it. So, we discontinued it on the new website. Maybe it's time to rethink this. In the meantime, feel free to contact the NYSFOLA office. We do know what many of you are up to based on your emails, newsletters, etc. We frequently put lake associations with one another. We would also be happy to put your requests/questions up on our facebook page.
11. **Intern Visits** - 88% of you said the visits were helpful. COVID-19 made intern visits impossible this year, but clearly field visits are important. 2020 was tough, but perhaps in 2021 we can find a way to get out to more of you with masks, sanitizer, and socially distant discussions.
12. **Training** - We're working on new ways to train volunteers while still ensuring quality. The videos are mostly up-to-date except that there is no HAB component, and the bottles have changed. The basics are still intact.

We're going to be taking a more in depth look at the survey results over the winter, but we wanted to provide some feedback before you packed up your Secchi disks for the winter. It's not too late to submit the survey if you haven't done so already. Again, we thank you all for an amazing season. Please feel free at any time to reach out with questions.