**Big Fish Lake Water Testing Results by Bill Unger**

Big Fish Lake Association has been a long-term participant in the RMB Environmental Laboratories Lakes Monitoring Program. As part of this program volunteers collect three water quality parameters: Total Phosphorus, Chlorophyll-a, and Secchi disk depth. These three parameters are inter-related, and as a whole produce a comprehensive picture of lake water quality.

I would encourage anyone interested in learning more about the process and BFL results to log into [WWW.RMBEL.COM](http://WWW.RMBEL.COM) and click on “lakes and streams” tab on top and navigate the drop down menu to “lakes database”, enter our county and lake and hit the magnifying glass to search. As well as finding BFL historical data you can see many of our neighboring lakes and how we compare. Under the same drop down menu you can click on “limnology primer” to learn more about what the readings mean and the different phases of lake health.

For those not visiting the site a high level summary of the data since 1994 shows the Phosphorus, Chlorophyll and Secchi readings are all better than historical averages.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Phosphorus | Chlorophyll | Secchi Depth |
| 1994-2017 Avg. | 14.7 | 3.3 | 14.4 |
| Summer 2017 Avg. | 9.7 | 1.8 | 17.6 |
| Comments | Lower is better | Lower is better | Higher is better |

It is hard to draw too many conclusions on exactly what is driving the data as lakes age naturally and are different just by virtue of geography. As an example lakes in northern Minnesota generally have rocky, sandy bottoms with lower phosphorus and chlorophyll readings, less plant growth and higher water clarity then their counterparts in Central Minnesota, which, in turn, have lower readings and are clearer then southern Minnesota Lakes.

Generally speaking though the trend is positive this should encourage us to continue looking for ways to reduce fertilizer, detergents and other contaminant flow into BFL. These actions will support a healthier and cleaner Lake for Lake Owners and their families to enjoy for generations to come.