



**January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Thank you very much to the 225 volunteers who participated in our CLMN Volunteer Survey. We wanted to take this opportunity to respond to the written feedback we received. Many comments were similar to others, so we've combined them into topics/categories and responded to these below.

### **Websites**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains several CLMN pages on their website. This is where you find your annual reports (you can also link to them through our UW-Extension Lakes website).

[www.dnr.wi.gov/lakes/clmn](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/lakes/clmn)

UW-Extension Lakes maintains the primary CLMN website, which contains forms, training resources, videos, contacts, archived issues of *The Monitor*, and other important educational information for our volunteers. You can find this by visiting the UWEX Lakes website ([www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes](http://www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakes)) and clicking on our CLMN logo, or you can go directly to our site by clicking this link: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/clmn/default.aspx>

Scroll down and click on the buttons for the various types of monitoring to learn more about each one and find resources related to that type of monitoring.

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### **Recognition of volunteers**

We greatly appreciate your efforts and understand the significant investment of your time and resources to collect data for CLMN. We do our best to make sure CLMN volunteers are recognized in newsletters, articles, scientific papers, and at the Wisconsin Lakes Convention. We recognize individual volunteers with certificates and anniversary pins every 5 years, and offer CLMN hats and notebooks at training events and the Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention. 25-year volunteers receive an oak plaque with their lake, name, and an engraved image of their lake. 30-year volunteers receive an acrylic award at the Wisconsin Lakes Convention during the awards banquet. Individual lake associations, districts, and counties often recognize individual lake volunteers as well, and we are happy to support these efforts by providing information on their contributions to CLMN. We tend to concentrate most of our budget on covering your supplies, shipping costs, and lab fees, rather than physical items of appreciation. Other states with similar monitoring programs tend to charge annual enrollment fees to participate, but we have done our best to avoid this, since we don't believe you should have to pay to volunteer with CLMN. Please know that we are extremely grateful to have you all as partners out there on our beautiful Wisconsin lakes.

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### Contacting your Regional CLMN Coordinator

We include a link to a list of CLMN Regional Coordinators on the UW-Extension Lakes CLMN website <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/clmn/default.aspx>. It is located near the bottom of most pages on our site. Click the link above and scroll down to find lists of staff that you may need to contact with various lake-related questions. If you ever have trouble finding the right person to contact, please contact me and I would be happy to help (Paul Skawinski, [pskawins@uwsp.edu](mailto:pskawins@uwsp.edu), 715-346-4853).

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### Recent developments/products/events referred to in question 8

Many of you said you were unfamiliar with some of these items. New events, opportunities, and updates tend to be shared through our email communications and *The Monitor* E-newsletter that we send out 3 times per year. Please make sure that you read the emails and newsletters to stay up-to-date on project updates and new opportunities for you. Links and/or descriptions of these items from question #8 are below:

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**CLMN AIS Early Detector Handbook** – if you are entering AIS monitoring data on your lake into the SWIMS database and do not have one of these handbooks, please let me know. This concise, full-color handbook was created a few years ago as a response to your feedback that the previous AIS Monitoring Manual was too large and complicated. It is now included with AIS monitoring kits given to volunteers who attend AIS monitoring training events and sign up to be monitors. You can download a free PDF of the handbook here: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/programs/CLMN/publications/Wisconsin%20AIS%20Early%20Detector%20Handbook.pdf>

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**Interpretive Guide to CLMN Water Quality Reports** – This was also created as a response to feedback received in the 2014 volunteer survey. It is a concise guide to understanding the data and acronyms used in your annual report. Find it on the Water Chemistry page of our website, or by clicking this link: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/programs/CLMN/InterpGuide-WaterQualityReports.pdf>

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**Professional aquatic plant identification summer trainings** – these trainings have been held every year for DNR professionals and lake managers who conduct aquatic plant surveys on lakes. They are similar to the workshop offered at the Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention each year, but also include a field component in boats and several breakout sessions. Several years ago, we stopped limiting registration to just professionals, and began inviting CLMN volunteers to join us at these summer trainings if they were interested in learning more about aquatic plant identification and ecology. The 2020 training locations will be in Woodruff, Spooner, and the Madison/Milwaukee area and have a small fee to attend (\$25-30, which includes lunch). Watch our website and *The Monitor* for the training registration to be announced in April 2020.

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**CLMN Lake Learning Day** – this is a free, bring-your-own-lunch event that helps to bring volunteers together to network and learn about topics of interest to them. Topics covered so far have included frogs/toads, turtles, loons, aquatic plants, dragonflies, and mussels. If there is a topic that you would like to learn about, please email Paul ([pskawins@uwsp.edu](mailto:pskawins@uwsp.edu)) with your suggested topic(s), and we will find an expert to speak about that topic(s) at an upcoming Lake Learning Day event.

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**The Monitor E-newsletter** – This newsletter was also created in response to feedback from the 2014 volunteer survey. It is sent out via email 3 times per year, and is meant to be a concise, 2-page newsletter that shares important updates and reminders with you, and includes 1 full-page article on a lake monitoring or water quality topic. The newsletters are archived on our Training Resources page <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/clmn/training.aspx> or you can go directly to the current issue here: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/programs/CLMN/newsletter/MonitorFall2019.pdf>

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**CLMN webinar series** – We started a webinar series in October, 2019. Two webinar topics have been covered so far: *Satellite Monitoring of Water Quality*, and *Unique Animals of Wisconsin Lakes*. We also partnered with the Water Action Volunteers stream monitoring program to offer a webinar on *Aquatic Plants in Streams*. Again, make sure you open our emails and read *The Monitor* to stay up-to-date on free webinar offerings. You can find recordings of these webinars here:

**Unique Animals of Wisconsin Lakes** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gxdfu2SLzJg>

**Satellite Monitoring of Water Quality** (our recording malfunctioned on this one but here is a different recording of the same presentation) <https://wiseeye.org/2019/10/02/maps-at-the-capitol-part-5-integrating-satellite-data-analysis-into-a-water-quality-monitoring-program/>

**Aquatic Plants in Streams** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPMiTygt3GI>

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**AIS Snapshot Day** is a one-day aquatic invasive species monitoring event where teams of volunteers and staff across the state sample boat landings and other access points for invasive species. Volunteers are trained for about 45 minutes, then form into small teams to sample 1-3 sites that are close by. Any suspicious samples are brought back to the training site to be immediately identified by a local expert. Any data entry and reporting is taken care of by the professional coordinator/expert of that training site. The statewide event is co-coordinated by the River Alliance of Wisconsin and UW-Extension Lakes. Learn more here: <https://www.wisconsinrivers.org/snapshot-day/>

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**Water clarity and chemistry monitoring training videos** – These videos demonstrate how to use your equipment to collect water clarity and water chemistry monitoring data for CLMN.

**Water clarity video** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i\\_eHBme4ZWU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_eHBme4ZWU)

**Water chemistry video** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rjhxj\\_ja0qY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rjhxj_ja0qY&feature=youtu.be)

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**Concerns about plant growth, water quality, lake levels, or AIS management** – please contact your Regional CLMN Coordinator or DNR Lakes Coordinators about these concerns. Your first-hand observations of the lake's conditions will paint a clearer picture of what is happening on your lake. Contact information for these staff can be found at these webpages:

Regional CLMN Coordinators:

[https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=CLMN\\_EQ](https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=CLMN_EQ)

DNR Lakes Coordinators:

[https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=LAKE\\_COORDINATOR](https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=LAKE_COORDINATOR)

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**More data in the annual reports** – this is something we have been working on for a couple of years now. Staff turnover, funding challenges, and IT contractor issues have all slowed this down more than we would have liked. A completely fresh and new way of displaying all kinds of lake data is being designed by DNR IT staff and IT contractors, and this new platform will display far more types of lake data, and will allow for ways to change how the data are displayed (changing the time period you want to compare, etc.). We are excited for this major update, but need to give Madison staff and contractors the necessary time to build this new platform and make all the necessary connections to pull the data in.

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**Testing additional locations or water quality parameters, including pH** – CLMN covers the cost of collecting several types of water quality data that are the most important for assessing the health of Wisconsin lakes. These data are used for official assessment of water quality according to requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which offers financial assistance to states to help them collect this information. These standard measurements, collected in the same way over many years, allow us to assess a lake's water quality, and compare it to other lakes that have been measured in the same ways.

You may be interested in additional information about your lake. CLMN has a limited budget to cover equipment, shipping, and lab analysis costs, but individuals, lake organizations, and municipalities will often test additional water quality parameters with their own equipment, or by sending water samples to independent water testing labs. Each lake is different, and the needs of each lake's surrounding community or lake managers are different as well. Several labs across the state are available to help with these individual needs, including the State Lab of Hygiene in Madison, the Water and Environmental Analysis Lab at UW-Stevens Point, and private labs.

Some lakes take water clarity readings at multiple points in the lake, such as different bays of the lake or in areas where inlets enter the lake or outlets exit the lake. This additional information is easy to collect and has essentially no cost to it, since there is no lab analysis needed. A small number of large, complex lake systems have more than one CLMN station on them, because the water quality conditions are quite different between these stations. If you feel that more than one water quality station is needed for your lake, please have a discussion with your local DNR Lakes Biologist or Regional CLMN Coordinator. Keep in mind that we are at full capacity each year for the number of stations we can financially support with water sample testing, so adding a testing station on a lake may prevent a different lake from participating at all. If additional sites are added, it is still very important to maintain the long-term record at the deep hole station to compare to previous years.

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**Can spring supplies be shipped to me instead of having to drive to a pickup location?** – Each year, new supplies are for the upcoming season are provided for our CLMN Volunteers. Among these items are lab slips and vials of acid for preserving phosphorus samples. Because this acid is considered a hazardous material, the packets can not be mailed. Therefore, pick up sites have been established. If it is more convenient to pick up your supplies at a site other than what is scheduled for your county, please let your Regional Coordinator know and arrangements can be made for an alternative pickup location.

Also, lab slips are coded each year for payment to the State Lab of Hygiene. It is important not to use last year's lab slips because the financial account for them has been closed.

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**Suggested edits to the volunteer manuals** – We are working on edits to the manuals, and a new Quality Assurance procedures tutorial video. We will refer to your comments as we work on these materials.

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**Difficulties with the SWIMS database** – If you are having trouble accessing the SWIMS database or entering your data, please contact Jake Dickmann at [Jacob.dickmann@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jacob.dickmann@wisconsin.gov) or 608-264-6129 for assistance.

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**Can we add more days to mail in samples?** – We suggest mailing your water chemistry samples on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. This is to ensure that your samples arrive at the lab by Friday, when staff are present to accept the samples and move them to the refrigerator or freezer. If your samples sit on a truck or at a processing facility over the weekend, the ice will likely melt and the sample results may be inaccurate. If you are only at your lake on the weekend, consider packing your samples into the shipping box with ice and taking them home with you. Place them into the fridge/freezer when you get home, and mail them from your primary residence on Monday with fresh ice in the box.

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**When does my annual data report become available?** – The CLMN annual reports are available anytime, any day, for all years your lake has participated. Find your annual report by visiting this page <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/clmn/> and clicking on your county, then your lake, then the year you are interested in. You can also view reports from any other lake participating in CLMN across the state. The data in the annual reports is updated daily, so the report will contain an up-to-date summary of your data within 1 day of you entering the information into the SWIMS database. If you need help understanding the data in your report, please refer to the *Interpretive Guide to CLMN Water Quality Reports* found on our Water Chemistry webpage: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/programs/CLMN/InterpGuide-WaterQualityReports.pdf>

Also on our webpage is the *Understanding Lake Data* publication <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/ecology/shoreland/background/understanding%20lake%20data.pdf>

If you still have questions about your report, please contact your Regional CLMN Coordinator to discuss your results in more detail.

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**I need more information on aquatic invasive species (AIS)** – We have a variety of resources on our website about aquatic invasive species that are present in Wisconsin lakes, and those that are in nearby states. Click this link to go to our AIS page and see our *AIS Early Detector Handbook* (available for free download), AIS fact sheets, and field guides. <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/programs/clmn/AIS.aspx>

You can also check to see if your county has a local AIS Specialist by clicking this link: [https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=AIS\\_CTY\\_TRIB](https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=AIS_CTY_TRIB)

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**I don't know who is UW-Extension staff and who is DNR staff** – CLMN is coordinated through UW-Extension Lakes, and Regional Coordinators are mostly DNR staff. Click here for a list of Regional Coordinators and their coverage areas: [https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=CLMN\\_EQ](https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=CLMN_EQ)  
The list below describes staff that regularly assist with CLMN:

**Paul Skawinski** is the Statewide CLMN Educator/Coordinator. He works for UW-Extension Lakes at UW-Stevens Point.

**Sandy Wickman** is a Regional CLMN Coordinator for the north-central counties and works out of the DNR office in Rhinelander. She is part-time with DNR and part-time with UW-Extension Lakes.

**Kris Larsen** is a Regional CLMN Coordinator for the northwestern counties and works out of the DNR office in Spooner. He works for the DNR.

**AJ Leiden** is a Regional CLMN Coordinator for part of the west-central region of Wisconsin and works for Beaver Creek Reserve in Fall Creek, WI.

**Kristen Rathbun** is also a Regional CLMN Coordinator for the west-central region. She works for DNR in Eau Claire.

**Sam Peterson** is a CLMN Coordinator for Adams County. He works for the Adams County Land Conservation Department.

**Rachel Sabre** is a Regional CLMN Coordinator for all of the southern counties. She works for DNR out of the Waukesha office.

**Ted Johnson** and **Chris Kolasinski** share Regional CLMN Coordinator duties for the east-central counties. They work for DNR out of the Oshkosh office.

**Mary Gansberg** is a Regional CLMN Coordinator for many of the northeastern counties. She works for DNR out of the Green Bay office.

**Brenda Nordin** and **Brian Zalay** share Regional CLMN Coordinator duties in the rest of the northeastern counties. They work for DNR out of the Green Bay office.

**Jake Dickmann** is the SWIMS Database Manager. **Katie Hein** is the State Lake Monitoring Leader. **Daniela Gurlin** is a Research Scientist coordinating the satellite water quality data. These three work for DNR in Madison.

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**I use the county's meter for oxygen/temperature monitoring and a lot of lakes are trying to get it on days that match the satellite dates** – It's ok if you are not able to take water clarity readings or collect water samples on the dates that the satellite is passing overhead. If these dates happen to work with your schedule, that's great and it will add even more value to your data. If shared chemistry equipment is not available on that day, you can still take a water clarity reading with your Secchi disc, which will provide clarity and color information to compare to the satellite data. We realize that monitoring on the satellite dates is not always going to work out.

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**Is it only July and August water clarity data that are included in the annual report?** – This depends on which report you are viewing. Let's look at Sunset Lake's 2019 data as an example. The annual report shows 14 water clarity readings between May and October. This includes all water clarity readings taken during the year. <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/CLMN/Station.aspx?id=503149>

The Narrative Report, Secchi Graph, and Trophic State Index graph include only July and August measurements in the calculation because only those measurements are used to assess a water body's condition according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines. For the purpose of official assessment of water bodies that gets reported to E.P.A., data from these two months is most important. Most lakes change throughout the season, with lower water clarity more likely in July and August. This

narrows the time window to the period most likely to have water quality problems, and narrows the seasonal variation so that trends across years can more easily be seen.

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**CLMN doesn't do anything to address shoreland restoration** – While CLMN staff certainly support shoreland restoration efforts, rain gardens, native shoreline plant communities, and other activities that promote good water quality and healthy lakes, the CLMN program itself focuses on monitoring the water quality of our lakes. Other staff from DNR, UW-Extension Lakes, counties, local non-profit organizations, and the Healthy Lakes program work more closely with shoreland restoration practices and projects. [www.healthylakeswi.org](http://www.healthylakeswi.org) is a great place to learn more about this important topic. CLMN fully supports healthy shorelands; it's just beyond the scope of our particular program.

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**How long can I refrigerate or freeze my samples before mailing in?** – Your phosphorus water sample (with acid added to it) can be stored in the refrigerator until the following Monday-Wednesday shipping period without a problem. The same is true for your chlorophyll sample tube in the freezer. Make sure that your lab slip has the correct date that you collected the samples, not the date that you shipped them.

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**The dates that the satellite passes over do not always match up to the time windows for collecting samples** – this is true. The satellites that provide data to us are owned and operated by NASA, not by us. There is nothing we can do to change the satellite flyover dates. Similarly, the time windows for chemistry sampling correspond to dates that will provide two qualifying samples for official water quality assessment according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines—late June and late July. The ice-out and late August samples provide additional information for DNR Lake Biologists to understand water quality trends at these two important time periods during the open-water season. Ideally, the satellite passes over on a sunny, calm, weekend day during a chemistry sampling period, but that certainly isn't always the case. Doing the best you can to match your sampling to the satellite dates is all you can do. It will not always work out that way, and that is completely fine and unavoidable. Even if the satellite date does not correspond to a chemistry sampling window, you could still take a water clarity reading on that day to take advantage of the satellite passover.

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### **Is my lake's aquatic plant management strategy working?**

This question or other questions about lake management or aquatic plant management are best answered by contacting your local DNR Lakes Coordinator.

[https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=LAKE\\_COORDINATOR](https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=LAKE_COORDINATOR)

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### **I worry that I am bothering staff with simple questions**

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you are having any problems! Your Regional CLMN Coordinator will happily assist with any issues. If you are having trouble reaching them, please reach out to Paul Skawinski at [pskawins@uwsp.edu](mailto:pskawins@uwsp.edu) or 715-346-4853 for assistance.

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### **Why do we keep monitoring lakes where we know a problem exists?**

Long-term monitoring data are very important in these cases, to understand if lake conditions are consistently problematic, if lake conditions fluctuate greatly between years, and if the problem is getting worse. Long-term data are also very important when a change happens relating to lake management, shoreline management, nearby development activities, land use changes, etc. These all have the potential to impact the lake's water clarity and quality, color, turbidity, plant and animal communities, and more. Long-term data collected before these changes happen will help to tease out cause-and-effect relationships between lake conditions and other changes in the surrounding landscape. Without consistent long-term data, it is difficult to demonstrate the effect that a particular action had on helping or furthering the problem.

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### **CLMN should do more to promote shoreline restoration**

CLMN is focused on lake monitoring. However, we absolutely support the restoration of shorelines to more natural habitats containing a diversity of native plant species. This type of shoreline can be not only beautiful and low-maintenance, it provides a wealth of benefits to the lake, the surrounding land, and the myriad of creatures big and small that naturally occur around lakes. If you are interested in helping your lake by reducing the size of your lakeside lawn or returning part of your shoreline to native wildflowers and other plants, take a look at the DNR's Healthy Waters grants. It's a great way to help your lake while sharing the cost with the DNR, increasing the beauty of your shoreline, preventing slow erosion of your property into the lake, reducing your time spent maintaining a lawn, and increasing the prevalence of birds, butterflies, frogs, and other fun lakeshore wildlife.

[www.healthylakeswi.org](http://www.healthylakeswi.org)

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### **How do I know that my samples were received and processed at the lab?**

The CLMN annual reports are updated daily, so as soon as your samples are analyzed at the State Lab of Hygiene and entered into the database, they will show up in your annual report. Find your annual report by visiting this page and clicking the appropriate county, then click *Details* next to your lake name, then click on the current year under *Annual Reports*. <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/clmn>

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### **The accuracy of the monitoring satellites is less than I thought it would be – is it really worth it for us to match our Secchi disc measurements to the satellite fly-over dates?**

Yes! The use of satellites for remotely sensing environmental conditions is still a relatively new technique. Continuing to collect Secchi disc measurements on the satellite fly-over dates whenever possible is important to continue refining the models used for the satellite retrievals. As more “real” data (your measurements) are used to calibrate these models, the accuracy of the satellite-retrieved water clarity data will increase.

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**We have a continuous-read thermometer on our lake – do I still need to record water temperatures during my chemistry monitoring procedures?**

Yes, please do. Continuous-read thermometers are typically attached to docks or other stationary objects near the lakeshore. These areas warm more quickly than the deeper areas of the lake, so the temperature data would be very different. Even if the thermometer is located on a buoy in a deeper area, it is still best to record the temperature data with your CLMN temperature meter and enter the data into SWIMS with your other CLMN data. This way, the data are visible as part of the CLMN annual reports and are consistent from year to year, collected with the same equipment.

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**Can't we create a smartphone app for volunteers to enter data into?**

This is something we are looking into. It will not replace the existing online data entry option, because not all volunteers have smartphones or even cell phone service when they are on the lakes. That said, it would be an efficient option for some volunteers, and we are interested in adding this option.