Taking Care of Data

Once you are back on shore, transfer all your data to the data form. This form will make it easier for you to enter your data online or submit by mail. After entering your data into the DNR database, fill in the column labeled "*Date Entered*" on your data form. This will allow you to keep track of what data you have already entered.

Online

The web address to enter your data online is **www. on.wisconsin.gov**. You will need a user name and password to enter data. Instructions for obtaining a user name and password are found at the CLMN website. If you are entering a temperature profile and/or dissolved oxygen profile choose the option "Save and Enter Temp D.O. Profile". If you make mistakes while entering data, edits can be made. Instructions for online data entry can be found in Appendix 4.

If you enter your data online, there is no need to mail in a paper copy.

All data for the year must either be entered by November 1st to guarantee that it will be included in reports and analyses done in the winter and spring. If you find data that has not been entered after this date you can still enter your data online or you can mail your data sheets to Citizen Lake Monitoring – WT/4, Wisconsin DNR, 101 S. Webster St., PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921. Staff will make sure that your data is entered into the database.

During the winter, you will receive an email or postcard reminding you that reports featuring the data you collected are available online. If you do not have an email address, lake summary reports will be mailed to you. Your reports will show the dates you sampled, and your Secchi disk readings measured in feet and meters. Always compare your annual report to a copy of your original data sheet to verify your data.
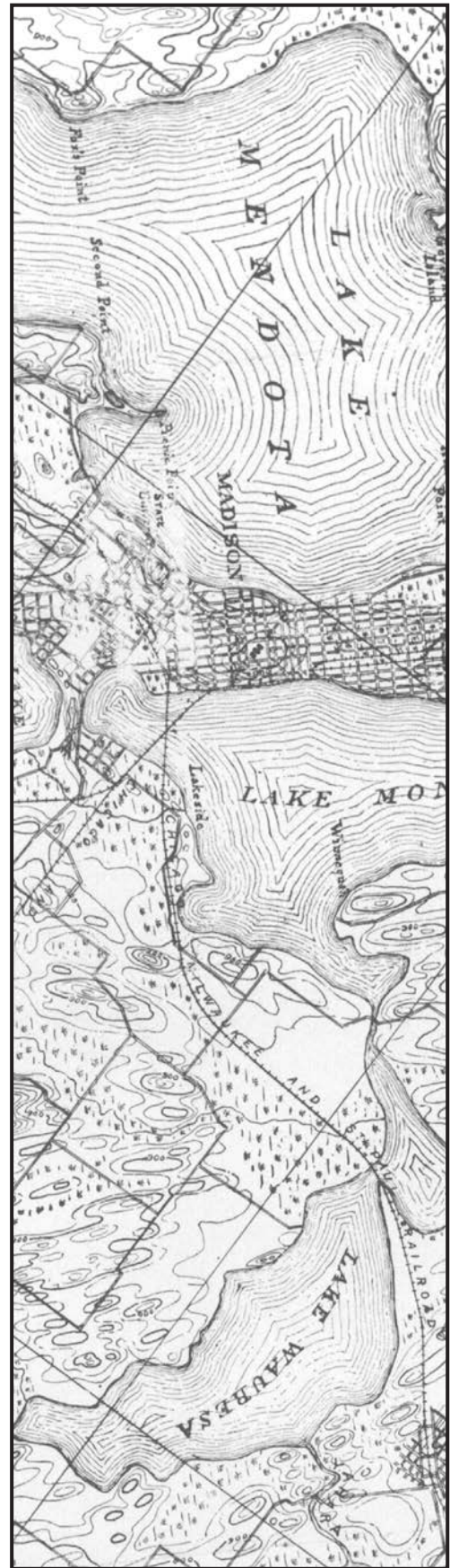
HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR FIELD DATA SHEET

During your training session, you should have received:

• A waterbody identification code (WBIC)

• Station #

The WBIC is a number assigned to your lake and allows the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network to know exactly which lake you are monitoring. The Station # is assigned to the specific monitoring site on your lake and the data that you collect is tied to that specific number. If you decide to change your sampling site, it is very important that you contact your regional coordinator right away so a new Station # can be assigned for that site. While you are sampling on your lake, record all of your data on the white "Field Data Form". You can use this same form for repeated sampling days until it is filled up, or too wrinkled from wind and water to use anymore. However, if you change sampling site locations within a lake or change lakes, you must use a new form!

The following descriptions represent the portions of your data sheet that can be filled out while you are on the shoreline or before you get into your boat. Data sheets can be found online.

Date

When recording the date it is only necessary to use 4 digits. For example, if you sampled on May 19th, you would record this on your data form as "0519"; July 6th would be "0706", etc. You do not need to include the year since your data is submitted annually.

Time

Record the time you started your sampling. If you are going to report your data using the Secchi line, you should record it in "military" time (e.g., 1:05 P.M. is 1305 hours). If you are reporting your data online, you can record your "civilian" time as you normally would by using A.M. and P.M.

Lake Level

Record the water level on your lake. It helps to use the shoreline or your pier as a guide to indicate whether your lake level is high, low, or normal. If you are able to determine the water level using a staff gauge on the lake, indicate this on the data sheet and record the numerical value in the space provided.

The following descriptions should be filled out while you are on the water at your sampling site so the observations are fresh in your mind.

Secchi Depth

When recording your Secchi disk reading, round off to the nearest quarter foot. Record fractions of a foot as a decimal since this is how it will be entered online. For example, 12 1/4 feet is 12.25 feet. It is possible that the Secchi disk will be visible even when it is resting on the bottom of the lake. If this is the case, record the depth as you always would, but make sure you record a "1" in the "Hit Bottom" field of your data sheet.

Appearance

To determine if the water appearance is clear or murky, hold your Secchi disk one foot under the surface of the water and observe how the white part of the disk appears.

Water Color

The water color is determined at your site using the Secchi disk as a guide. After lowering the disk about a foot into the water, ask yourself the question, "Does the white part of the Secchi disk look white, or does it appear green or brown?" If it appears white, then the water color is "blue." If it appears green, then the water color is "green" and so on. If you are using color cards to determine the color of your lake water, then the white part of the disk would be compared to the colors on the card and a numeric value assigned to the color. Be aware that the online data entry form and Secchi Line only accept one color, for instance, if the water appears "bluish-green," you will have to select the one color (blue or green) that best describes your water color.

Perceptions

Indicate your perception of the water quality for your lake at the deep hole. **Refer only to the condition of the water itself.** You can record information on aquatic plants around the shoreline or other problems you perceive in the observation section of the data sheet. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the best and 5 being the worst), your perception of the water should reflect how much algae is in the water.

1 - Beautiful, could not be any nicer

2 - Very minor aesthetic problems; excellent for swimming and boating enjoyment

3 - Swimming and aesthetic enjoyment of lake slightly impaired because of high algae levels

4 - Desire to swim and level of enjoyment of lake substantially reduced because of algae (would not swim, but boating is OK)

5 - Swimming and aesthetic enjoyment of lake substantially reduced because of algae levels

Observations

In the observation section of the data sheet, you can include any comments about the weather, water conditions, wildlife sightings, plant densities, or other information you want to include that you think will help to better understand your lake. If you need more data sheets, have questions or problems, you may also include those comments in this section. Feel free to attach additional observations on a separate sheet of paper. You can enter as much information as you'd like. The database is capable of holding a very long entry.

HOW TO REPORT ICE ON/OFF INFORMATION

You can report your ice observations online through SWIMS. After you log in, choose the Ice Observations project for your lake.

ROBERT QUEEN