The 26th Annual Secchi Dip-In

Time to get your discs ready for the 2019 Secchi Dip-In!

The Dip-In takes place during Lakes Appreciation Month, July 1st to 31st. The Dip-In is an international event during which volunteers collect a "snapshot" of the water quality in their area. Volunteers from across North America have participated in this event for over twenty-five years!

The Secchi Dip-In is an annual event that brings out volunteers throughout North America to gather important environmental information about their lakes. The Secchi disc is one of the most basic tools for evaluating water quality of lakes. It measures water transparency (clarity) which is a good indicator of the impacts from human activity on the land surrounding a water body. If transparency is measured through the season and from year to year, trends in transparency can be observed. It can serve as an early warning that activities on the land are affecting water quality.

The BCLSS needs your help!

The BCLSS would like to increase the number of lakes and dippers taking part in British Columbia. Participation has been decreasing for many years, so please spread the word about this valuable and fun event!

What is a Secchi Disc ?

Father Pietro Angelo Secchi, scientific advisor to the Pope, was asked by Commander Cialdi, head of the Papal Navy, to develop and test a new water transparency instrument in the Mediterranean Sea. This instrument, now named the Secchi disc, was first lowered from the papal steam yacht l'Immacolata Concezione (The Immaculate Conception) in the Mediterranean Sea on April 20, 1865.

The typical Secchi disc used in lakes is an 8-inch disc with alternating black and white quadrants. It is lowered into the water until the observer can no longer see it. The depth of disappearance, called the Secchi depth, is a measure of the transparency of the water.

Transparency decreases as the amount of particulate materials - such as algae and suspended sediment - increases. The amount of algae that grows is affected by the amount of nutrients coming from sewage treatment plants, septic tanks, and lawn and agricultural fertilizer, as well as suspended sediments washed from construction sites, agricultural fields, urban storm runoff, or churned upward from bottom deposits.

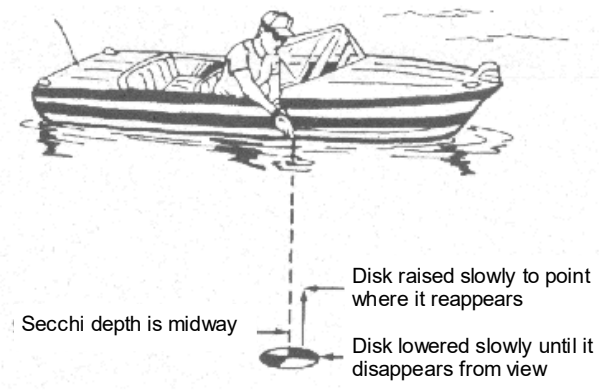
How to Use a Secchi Disk

Step 1
Lower the Secchi disc over the shaded side of the boat.

Step 2
Lower the disc until the black and white pattern is no longer visible.

Step 3
Count the number of meter increments (marked on the rope) between the Secchi disc and the surface water (estimate to the nearest cm). Record this as Distance A.

Step 4
Pull the disc up until the pattern appears again and record this as Distance B.



Step 5
Average the two measurements and record them on the information sheet.

i.e. $\frac{(\text{Distance A} + \text{Distance B})}{2}$ = Secchi Depth

Step 6
Fill in the remainder of the information on the data sheet and send it to:

BC Lake Stewardship Society
1257 Erskine Street
Coquitlam, BC V3B 6R3
info@bclss.org

If you need any assistance, please phone our office at **1-877-BC-LAKES (1-877-225-2537).**

Did you know?

You can also learn how to take measurements by watching NALM's student-produced "How to Take a Secchi Depth" video.

Important points to remember:

- Please do not go out if it is raining, if there is abnormally high boat traffic, or if your safety would be at risk. A clear, calm day would be best.
- Always measure on the shady side of the boat.
- Do not wear your sunglasses while conducting the measurement.