

LAKE FACTS AS OF AUGUST 22, 2020 BY MIKE BACKUS

Rain

Not too many years ago lake residents wanted to see farm irrigation banned because our lake level often dropped close to 12" during the boating season! Farm irrigation taps the same water table that feeds our natural springs. This year many of us wished they would irrigate much more! However, Ma Nature had other plans. Since March 30, 2020 the lake area had 17.95" of rain and therefore limited irrigation took place. As of early July southern Adams Co received 3 years worth of rain in the last 2 years.

Lake Water Level

Currently the lake level at my pier gauge is DOWN 5" since I started monitoring on May 6th. Consider this fact based on the rain we got listed above: Jordan has about 233 acres of surface water (much larger these past 2 years). If we get a 2" rain some 12,500,000 gallons of water is added to our lake without adding any amount of runoff water. This season we have had 2 such rainfalls.

Water Temps

The season started with below average water temps but the heat of July drove the surface water temps up considerably. Lowest surface temp during my monitoring was 52 degrees on May 13 and the highest surface temp was 81.1 degrees on July 4th.

Adams Water Resource Specialist

Sam Peterson from Adams Land and Water Conservation Dept has left his position and moved to Columbia Co Land Conversation. Kason Morley is still Adams Co Conservationist.

Chemical Water Tests

Tests for Phosphorus and Chlorophyll were done in June and July. The August test will be done next week and the season results will be published in the end of the year report. The preliminary results show both readings have increased over last year due mostly to rain runoff/erosion and high air temps.

Water Clarity

Lake water clarity was measured 13 times so far this season. The best reading was 22 feet on May 13 and the worst reading thus far was 11 feet on Aug 5th. Our season clarity average will probably be less than 2019 due to runoff and erosion impact. Of the 13 tests conducted, 10 were done on days that the satellite was taking pictures of the lake for the same purpose.

Algae

This has been the worst algae seen in the lake for many years. According to my DNR contact, the general algae conditions this year are “downright weird” in our area. We are not the only lake who has seen this condition. Cold spring weather, water temps, erosion, water level and nutrients from rain runoff all impact growing conditions and change the lake ecosystems. Changes to one or more factors impacts the others and often algae growth wins! We have definitely seen the negative results this season and most of the experts don’t know exactly why.

Blue-Green Algae (BGA)

This particular kind of algaewill have foul odor, a layer of thick scum on the surface, will often kill other plants and can pose a health risk. It is a form of bacteria and increases with higher outside temperature. Yes, it sometimes is toxic and might kill small animals. Most of us hear all about it on the Madison TV for their lakes usually get it as do some of the other lakes in Adams Co. Jordan has NEVER had BGA to date! To be extra safe can we test for toxin being in our lake?

Again my DNR source says testing for toxic algae is very difficult because BGA, and other algae, do not always produce toxins and results change within short periods of time. They don’t know why and they can’t predict when it happens so testing is at best ‘hit and miss’ often resulting in expensive incorrect conclusions.