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Assessment of 2023 Water Quality in Rogers Lake

With An Historical Analysis from 2005 to 2023

Prepared for
Rogers Lake Authority
119 Shore Drive
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Sincerely,

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

David Post's Lab at Yale University conducted a water quality analysis of Rogers Lake for the year 2023 as agreed upon with the Rogers Lake Authority (RLA). This report shares the results of 2023 water quality data and makes comparisons to historical data collected from 2005-2022 to identify trends in Rogers Lake water quality.

1.2 Methods

Rogers Lake was sampled 14 times in 2023 on the dates of Apr 4, Apr 18, May 1, May 17, Jun 2, Jun 15, Jun 29, Jul 11, Jul 25, Aug 9, Aug 28, Sep 22, Oct 19, and Nov 16. This follows the yearly sampling protocol the Post Lab has used to sample the lake, which usually begins in April and continues biweekly until mid-September, and then monthly in October and November. Historical samples from 2005-2022 were collected on 10-14 dates per year. No sampling was conducted in 2012. Water samples were collected from a single sampling site located south of Blood St. and northeast of Shore Dr. where the lake is deepest (20 m).

Water Quality Parameters Measured

- Temperature
- Dissolved Oxygen
- Secchi Depth Transparency
- Chlorophyll-a
- Total Phosphorus
- Total Nitrogen
- Nitrate-Nitrogen
- Nitrite-Nitrogen

- Phosphate-Phosphorus
- pH
- Conductivity
- Chloride
- Bromide
- Fluoride
- Sulfate

1.3 Key Results

Rogers Lake is currently in good ecological health and can be classified as a mesotrophic lake. However, 2023 results show long-term mean annual values for total phosphorus and total nitrogen are continuing to gradually increase, and water clarity is continuing to gradually decrease. Chlorophyll-a and Nitrate-Nitrogen values are also increasing in summer. Lower dissolved oxygen levels in the month of July may be attributed to use of aquatic herbicides.

A summary of the mean annual values for all parameters and their long-term trends can be found in Table 1. Descriptions of each water quality parameter and more detailed results with figures can be found in Section 5 Results. A basic primer on the statistics used in this report can be found in Appendix I, with statistical results tables for the analyses in Appendices II and III.

Table 1. Mean annual values for Rogers Lake water quality parameters for 2023, 2022, and long-term status.

Parameter	Mean Annual Value for 2023	Mean Annual Value for 2022	Long-term Trends
Temperature	20.0 ± 5.94 °C	20.1 ± 6.56 °C	Stable
Dissolved Oxygen	8.49 ± 1.20 mg/L	8.92 ± 1.21 mg/L	Decreasing in summer
Secchi Disk Transparency	2.11 ± 0.23 m	2.18 ± 0.41 m	Decreasing
Chlorophyll-a	7.83 ± 4.92 µg/L	6.19 ± 4.99 µg/L	Increasing in summer
Total Phosphorus	17.21 ± 4.66 µg/L	15.52 ± 2.74 µg/L	Increasing
Total Nitrogen	0.39 ± 0.11 mg/L	0.36 ± 0.03 mg/L	Increasing
Nitrate-Nitrogen	0.118 ± 0.030 mg/L	0.106 ± 0.003 mg/L	Increasing in summer
pH	6.71 ± 0.26	6.67 ± 0.32	Stable
Conductivity	63.4 ± 4.99 µS/cm	65.2 ± 5.26 µS/cm	Stable
Bromide	0.035 ± 0.002 mg/L	0.037 ± 0.009 mg/L	Stable
Chloride	7.99 ± 0.88 mg/L	7.74 ± 0.41 mg/L	Stable
Fluoride	0.076 ± 0.004 mg/L	0.075 ± 0.004 mg/L	Stable
Sulfate	4.74 ± 0.59 mg/L	4.35 ± 0.25 mg/L	Stable

1.4 Recommendations

Continued water quality sampling is recommended to track potential changes and to see if the gradual increases in total phosphorus and total nitrogen and decreases in water clarity continue. The RLA should review timing and application of aquatic herbicides. Application in summer months may be contributing to declines in dissolved oxygen. While the water quality in Rogers Lake is good, and no urgent action needs to be taken, the following recommendations are suggested as general good environmental practices to reduce nutrient inputs into Rogers Lake:

- Reduction and proper timing of lawn fertilization
- Maintaining septic systems
- Using phosphate-free detergents
- Planting vegetation buffers along the shoreline
- Invasive species monitoring and spread prevention

2. INTRODUCTION

Since 2005, David Post's lab in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University (Post Lab) has collected water samples from Rogers Lake as part of a decadal research program. Water samples are collected and analyzed to track changes in water quality and lake ecology through time.

The Rogers Lake Authority (RLA) has commissioned analyses of water quality in Rogers Lake since at least 2014. Rogers Lake is a 260-acre lake in Connecticut which borders the towns of Lyme and Old Lyme. The lake sees moderate watercraft activity in summer months and is surrounded by wooded areas and private residences. In 2022, an agreement was reached between the Post Lab and the RLA for the Post Lab to collect and analyze water samples for 2022, and to share results of samples collected since 2005. This agreement was extended for 2023.

This report will summarize findings of water samples collected in 2023 and make comparisons to samples collected from 2005-2022. The Post Lab dataset on Rogers Lake water quality spans nearly 20 years and ~215 sampling dates. This data will enable the RLA to better understand long-term trends in water quality and ecological health of the lake. Recommendations will also be provided for future water quality monitoring and management.

Reporting changes for 2023 report:
- Preliminary data from 2004 has been excluded.
- Nitrate, Nitrite, and Orthophosphate are now measured and reported as Nitrate-Nitrogen, Nitrite-Nitrogen, and Phosphate-Phosphorus.
- Nitrite-Nitrogen and Phosphate-Phosphorus were measured in all samples, but amounts were below detection limits in almost all nitrite-nitrogen, and most phosphate-phosphorus samples. This resulted in limited data, so these two parameters are excluded from this report.
- Fluoride, Chloride, Bromide, and Sulfate have been reanalyzed. It was found before 2023 analysis that a faulty column on the Ion Chromatograph caused readings that were too high for historical samples. This has been corrected for this report and has not significantly changed results.

3. BACKGROUND

Spring turnover, summer lake stratification, and fall turnover are three lake processes that play critical roles in nutrient cycling, oxygen distribution, and overall ecological health within temperate lakes. Understanding when these events occur during the year will help in interpreting the water quality results, as they can have large impacts on some of the parameters measured.

Spring turnover occurs in Rogers Lake in March-April, when ice melts and the top layer of water is warmed to a temperature that matches the water below. At this temperature equilibrium, denser water sinks and mixes with water below resulting in turnover. During turnover, the physical and chemical properties of the lake, including temperature, dissolved oxygen, and nutrient concentrations, are generally uniform from top to bottom.

Lake stratification occurs in Rogers Lake primarily in spring and summer. As solar radiation and air temperatures increase in spring, the top layer of the lake is warmed more than during turnover. The lake begins to stratify forming distinct temperature layers:

a. The epilimnion, the warm and less dense top layer of the water column, has temperature and dissolved oxygen levels that are generally uniform. This layer is mixed by wind and the less dense warm water does not easily mix with cooler water below. The summer epilimnion in Rogers Lake is typically found from the surface down to 3-4 meters deep.

b. The metalimnion is middle layer and is characterized by sharp declines in temperature and dissolved oxygen with depth. The summer metalimnion in Rogers Lake is typically located at depths from 3-8 meters.

c. The hypolimnion, the cold and dense bottom layer, is not readily mixed with the warmer waters above. As organic matter decays and sinks to the bottom, it is decomposed in the hypolimnion by bacteria. This process consumes oxygen and because the water in this layer does not mix with warmer water from above, the hypolimnion remains oxygen-depleted until fall turnover. The summer hypolimnion in Rogers Lake is typically found at depths from 8-20 meters.

Fall turnover occurs in Rogers Lake sometime between October-December when solar radiation and air temperatures decrease causing surface waters to cool and become denser. The dense water sinks and begins to mix with the layers below, eventually resulting in an equilibrium where the whole lake has uniform temperature, dissolved oxygen, and nutrients concentrations (similar to spring turnover).

4. METHODS

4.1 Sample Collection

The Post Lab begins collecting water samples at Rogers Lake near spring turnover (~April 1), continuing biweekly until mid-September to capture summer lake stratification, and then monthly in October and November to capture fall turnover. There were 10-14 sampling dates per year from 2005-2023, including 14 for 2023. No sampling was conducted in 2012. Water samples have been collected at the same location since 2005 (Figure 1). This sampling site is located south of Blood St. and northeast of Shore Dr. where the lake is deepest, with depths of just over 20 m.

Data for temperature, dissolved oxygen, and secchi disk transparency were collected on-site from 2005 to 2023. Depth profiles of temperature and dissolved oxygen were generated from 0 to 14 m depth. Samples were collected every 0.5 m from 0-6 m and every 1 m from 6-14 m. Measurements were taken using YSI Digital Water Quality Meters. The secchi disk transparency

was measured using a secchi disk that was lowered into the water until the disk was no longer visible.

The epilimnion, which supports most of the productivity and aquatic life in summer, was the focus for sampling chlorophyll-a, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, phosphate-phosphorus, nitrate-nitrogen, nitrite-nitrogen, fluoride, chloride, bromide, sulfate, pH, and conductivity measurements. Water samples were collected with a Van Dorn water sampler and transported to Yale for analysis in the Post Lab laboratories or at the Yale Analytical and Stable Isotope Center (YASIC). Chlorophyll-a, total phosphorus, and total nitrogen were measured from 2005-2023. Nitrate-nitrogen, nitrite-nitrogen, fluoride, chloride, bromide, sulfate, and phosphate-phosphorus were measured from 2014-2023. pH and Conductivity were measured in 2022 and 2023 only. Equipment used to conduct the analyses and units of measure can be found in Table 2.
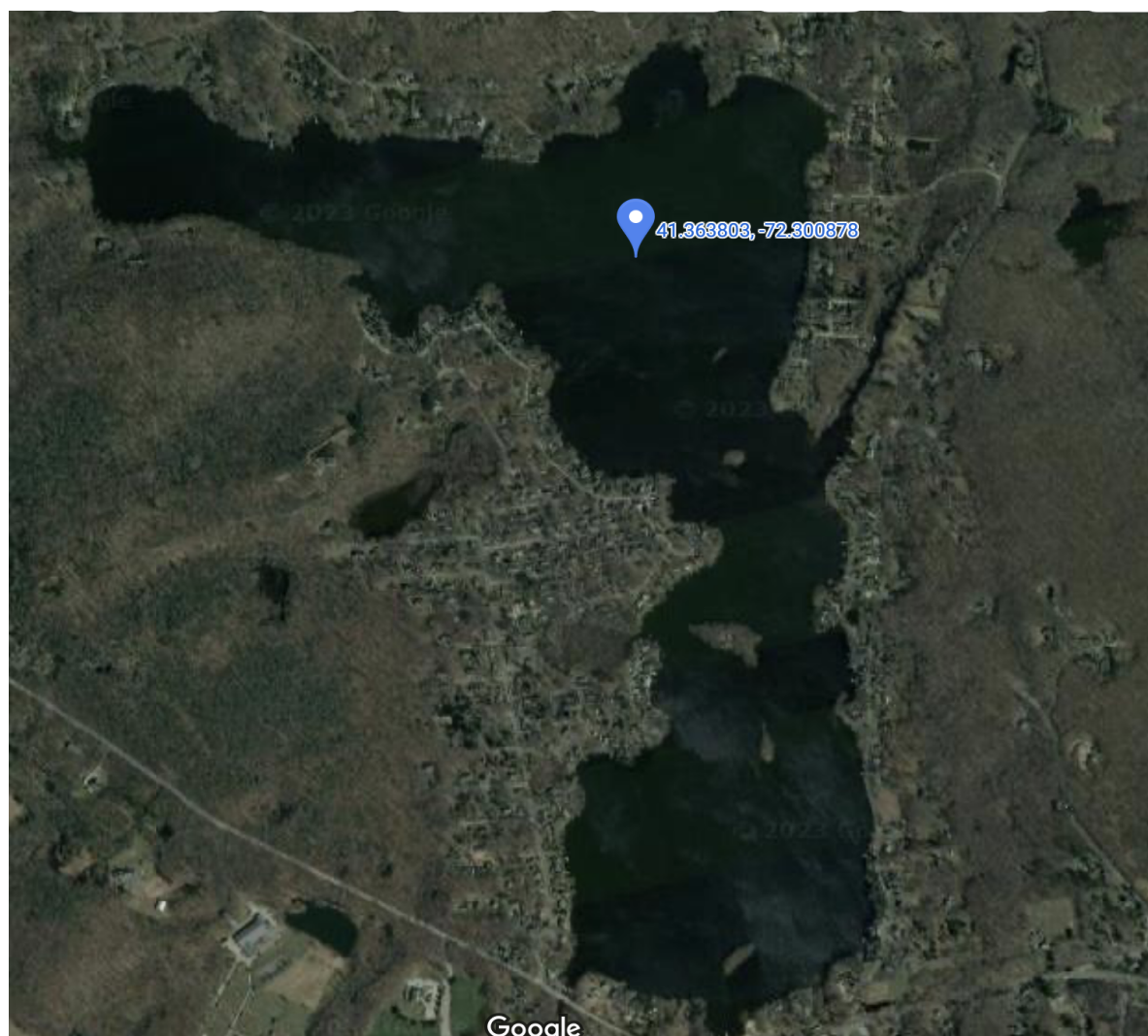

Figure 1. Photo of Rogers Lake from Google Maps showing the Sampling Site location and coordinates.

4.2 Sample Processing

Water samples collected using the Van Dorn water sampler were stored in a cooler and transported back to the laboratory. For chlorophyll-a, a 250 ml sample from each of the top, middle, and bottom of the epilimnion were run separately through Whatman GF/C glass microfiber filters to capture all algae. The filters were frozen for 7-14 days and then analyzed on a Turner Designs Trilogy Laboratory Fluorometer. Values for these three samples were then averaged to get the final chlorophyll-a value. A 250 ml aliquot of combined water samples from the top, middle, and bottom of the epilimnion was used for pH and conductivity measurements. Another 250 ml aliquot of the combined sample was frozen for analysis of total phosphorus, total nitrogen, nitrate-nitrogen, nitrite-nitrogen, phosphate-phosphorus, fluoride, chloride, bromide, and sulfate. This sample was thawed and total phosphorus and total nitrogen analysis was conducted using an Astoria 2 Flow Analyzer. Nitrate-nitrogen, nitrite-nitrogen, phosphate-phosphorus, fluoride, chloride, bromide, and sulfate were analyzed on a Metrohm Ion Chromatograph.

Table 2. List of parameters analyzed, their unit of measure, and the equipment used to analyze samples.

Analyses	Units	Equipment
Temperature	Degrees Celsius (°C)	YSI Digital Water Quality Meter
Dissolved Oxygen	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	YSI Digital Water Quality Meter
Chlorophyll-a	Micrograms per Liter (µg/L)	Trilogy Laboratory Fluorometer
Total Phosphorus	Micrograms per Liter (µg/L)	Astoria 2 Flow Analyzer
Total Nitrogen	Micrograms per Liter (µg/L)	Astoria 2 Flow Analyzer
Phosphate-Phosphorus	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Nitrate-Nitrogen	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Nitrite-Nitrogen	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Fluoride	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Chloride	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Bromide	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Sulfate	Milligrams per Liter (mg/L)	Metrohm Ion Chromatograph
Turbidity	Meters (m)	Secchi Disk
Conductivity	Micro siemens per centimeter (µS/cm)	Orapxi Salinity and Conductivity Meter
pH	pH	Orion Star A121 Portable pH Meter

***mg/L** is equivalent to parts per million (ppm). **µg/L** is equivalent to parts per billion (ppb).

4.3 Statistical Analysis

R Studio version 1.4.1717 was utilized for all data analyses and figures. To analyze changes in parameters across years, we calculated a **mean annual** value that was the average of all samples taken within the year and **mean monthly** values that averaged all the samples taken within a month. For most water quality parameters, we created plots showing the change in mean monthly

values throughout the 2023 sampling season, the change in mean monthly values across years within each month (providing a higher resolution look at changes in water quality), and the change in mean annual values across years.

Data from 2-3 m depth were used for temperature and dissolved oxygen to maintain consistency and avoid weather variance by sampling date. Data from samples combined from the top, middle, and bottom of the epilimnion were used for other parameters. Long-term trends were examined via linear regression for both mean annual and mean monthly values for each parameter (see Appendix I for a description of linear regression and statistical measurements used in the analysis). Additionally, depth profile plots were generated for temperature and dissolved oxygen.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Temperature

During the 2023 sampling period, mean annual temperature at 2-3 m depth in the epilimnion was 20.0 ± 5.94 °C (Table 1). Mean monthly temperature was coolest in November at 9.86°C and warmest in July at 27.2°C. Spring turnover occurred in April and fall turnover occurred in November, as indicated by less temperature stratification with depth. (Figure 2).

There remains no significant relationship between mean monthly temperature (Figure 3) or mean annual temperature with year from 2005-2023 (Figure 4). Statistical results are provided in Appendix II, Table 2.1 and Appendix III, Table 3.1.
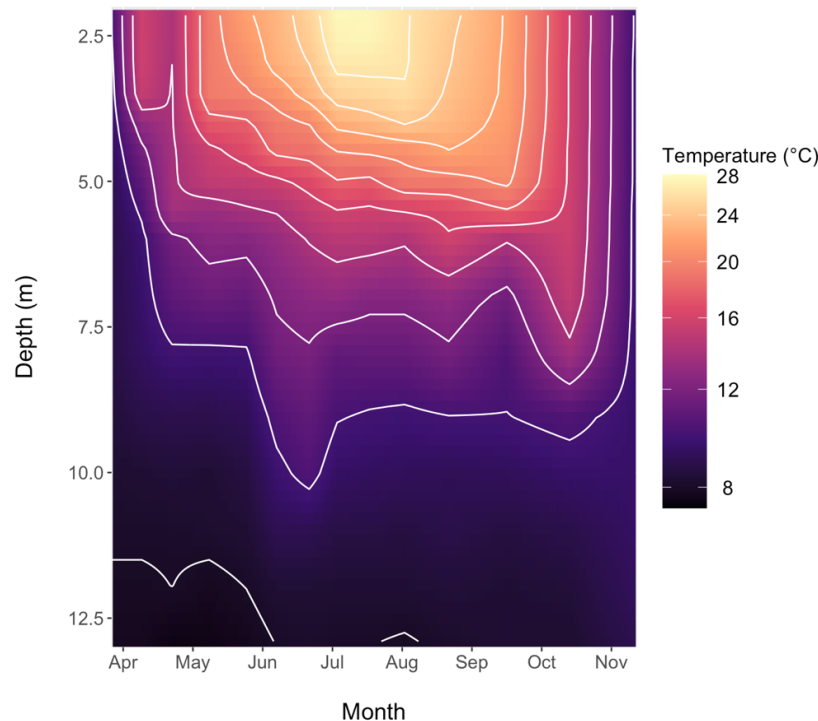

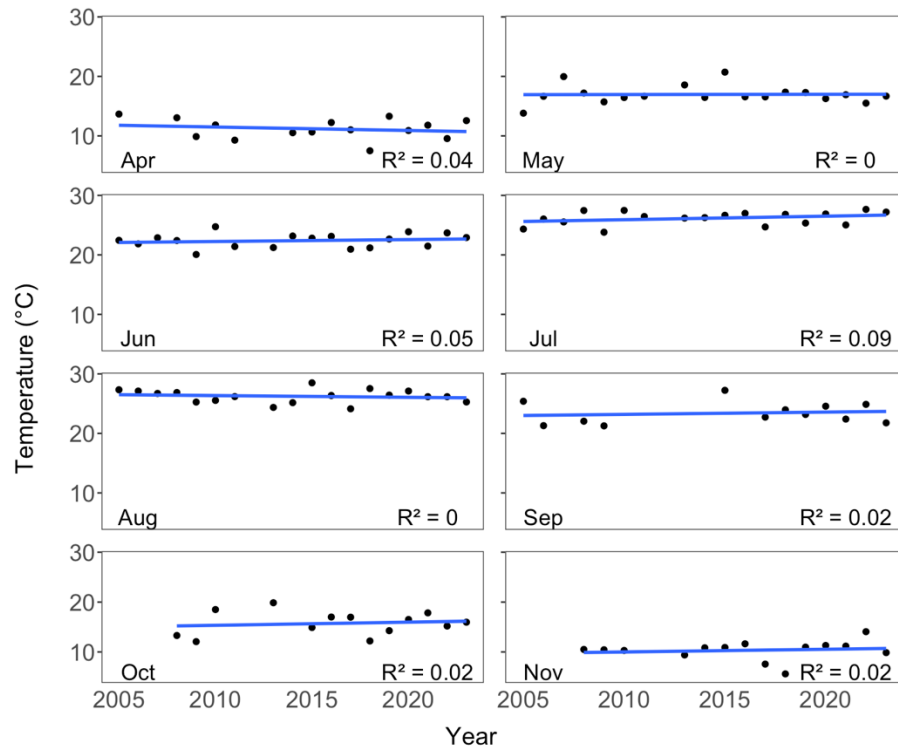**Figure 2.** Temperature stratification with depth in Rogers Lake from April to November 2023.

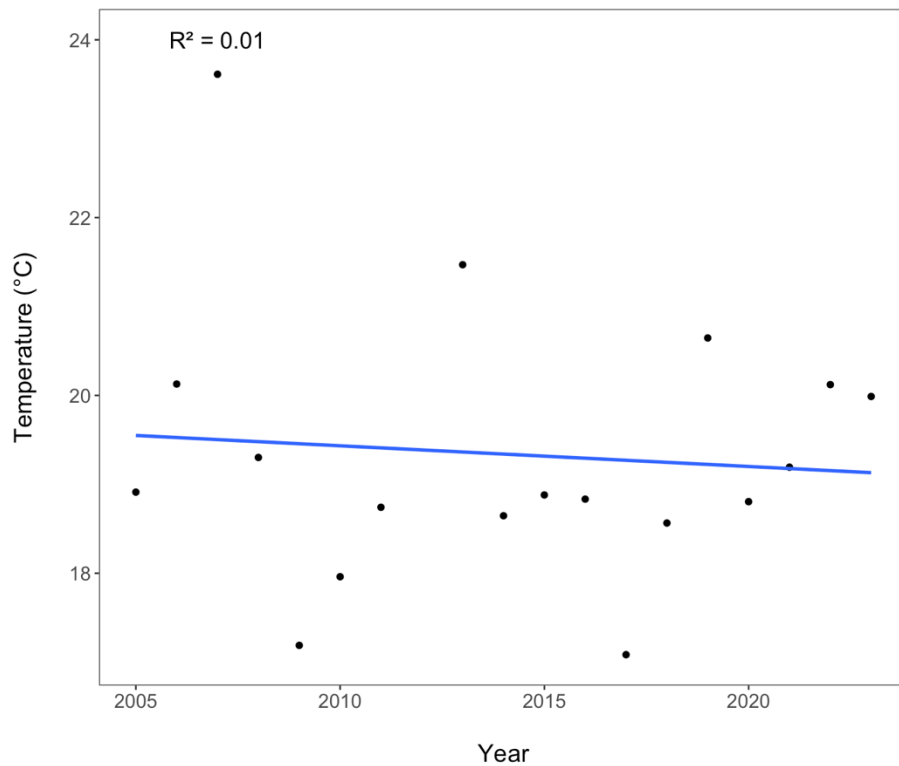**Figure 3.** Mean monthly epilimnetic temperature at 2-3 m depth from 2005-2023.

Figure 4. Mean annual epilimnetic temperature at 2-3 m depth from 2005-2023.

5.2 Dissolved Oxygen

Adequate dissolved oxygen (DO) in freshwater is critical for life and maintaining the health and well-being of the ecosystem. Low DO conditions can stress or cause death to most plants and organisms. DO values are typically lower in the summer as warmer water holds less oxygen and higher aquatic plant and algae densities use more DO during photosynthesis. Oxygen-depletion is common in deeper waters of freshwater lakes that have moderate to high productivity in summer as bacteria consumes oxygen during decomposition of organic matter that has sunk to the bottom.

During the 2023 sampling period, mean annual DO at 2-3 m depth in the epilimnion was 8.49 ± 1.20 mg/L (Table 1). Mean monthly DO was highest in April at 10.26 ± 0.03 mg/L and was lowest in July at 6.84 ± 0.50 mg/L (Figure 5).

2023 mean annual DO was the second lowest measured for 2005-2023. Three of the four lowest mean annual DO values have occurred since 2019. Mean annual (Figure 7) and mean monthly (Figure 6) DO with year now show statistically significant declines, primarily driven by lower DO values in the month of July (Appendix II, Table 2.1 and Appendix III, Table 3.1). Causes remain unknown. Lower DO values most correlate with higher temperatures, but there are not significant increases in water temperature over the same period. This suggests possible increased nutrient input and/or increased biological oxygen demand. The authors note Rogers Lake was treated with aquatic herbicides in early July 2023 but do not have dates from previous years. Aquatic herbicide treatments can increase biological oxygen demand from decomposition of dead aquatic plants causing lower dissolved oxygen concentrations.
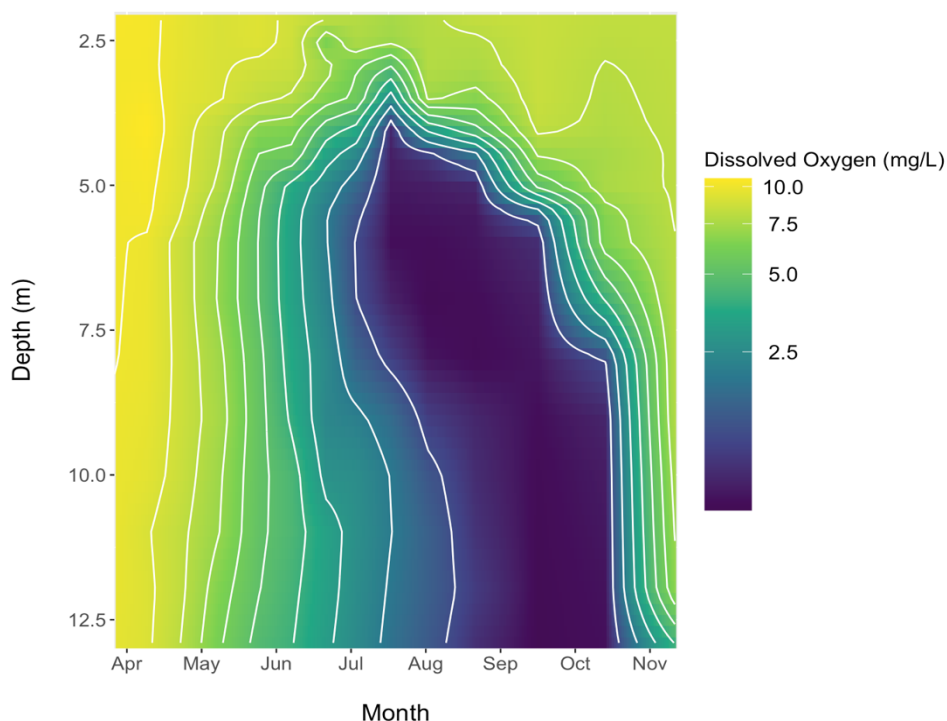

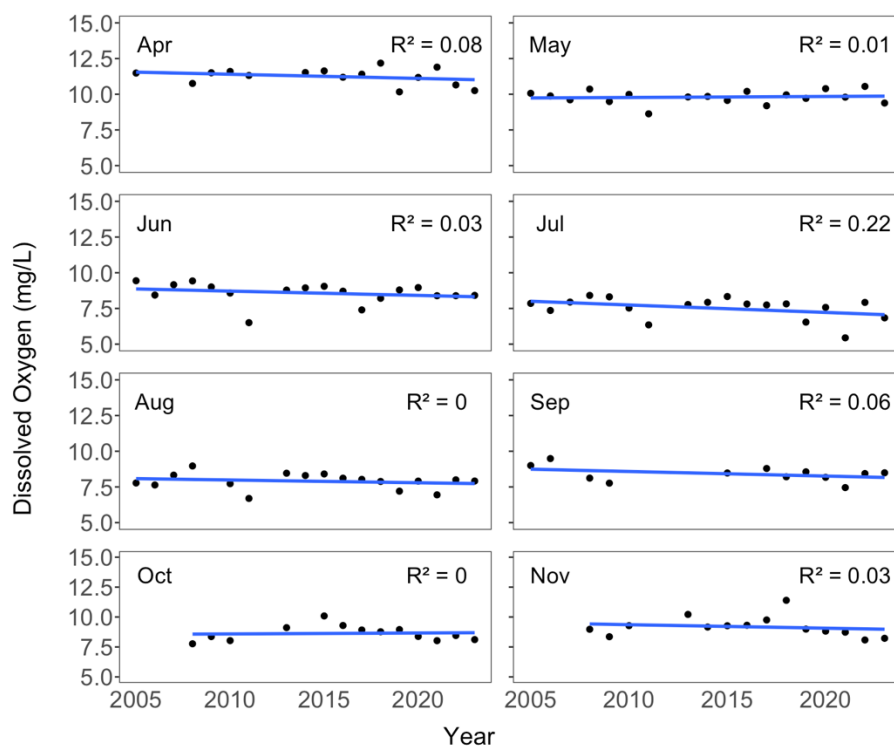**Figure 5.** Depth profile of dissolved oxygen in Rogers Lake from April to November 2023.

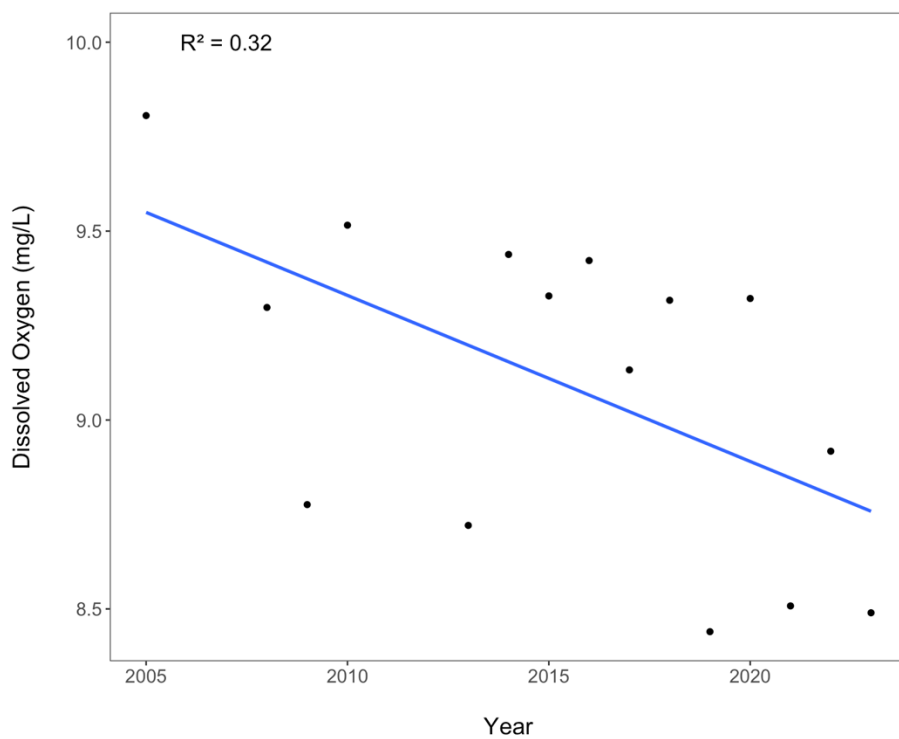**Figure 6.** Mean monthly epilimnetic dissolved oxygen at 2-3 m depth from 2005-2023.

Figure 7. Mean annual epilimnetic dissolved oxygen at 2-3m depth from 2005-2023.

5.3 pH

pH influences a wide array of biological, chemical, and ecological processes within a lake. These include the solubility and cycling of nutrients, the buffering capacity of the water, and the overall health of the ecosystem. Generally, the pH range observed in most freshwater ecosystems falls between 6 and 8 during summer months but can fluctuate during spring and fall turnover.[4]

During the 2023 sampling period, pH in the epilimnion was 6.1 during the first week of April, increased to 6.7-6.8 in May, and remained between 6.8-7.1 for the rest of the summer (Figure 8). It decreased to 6.2 in November as the lake began to mix. These values are typical for freshwater. Low pH observed in early spring and late fall is likely due to turnover. Turnover can lead to a decrease in pH due to the release of carbon dioxide and redistribution of nutrients from the deeper layers. 2023 pH was similar to 2022. The Post Lab did not measure pH in Rogers Lake prior to 2022.
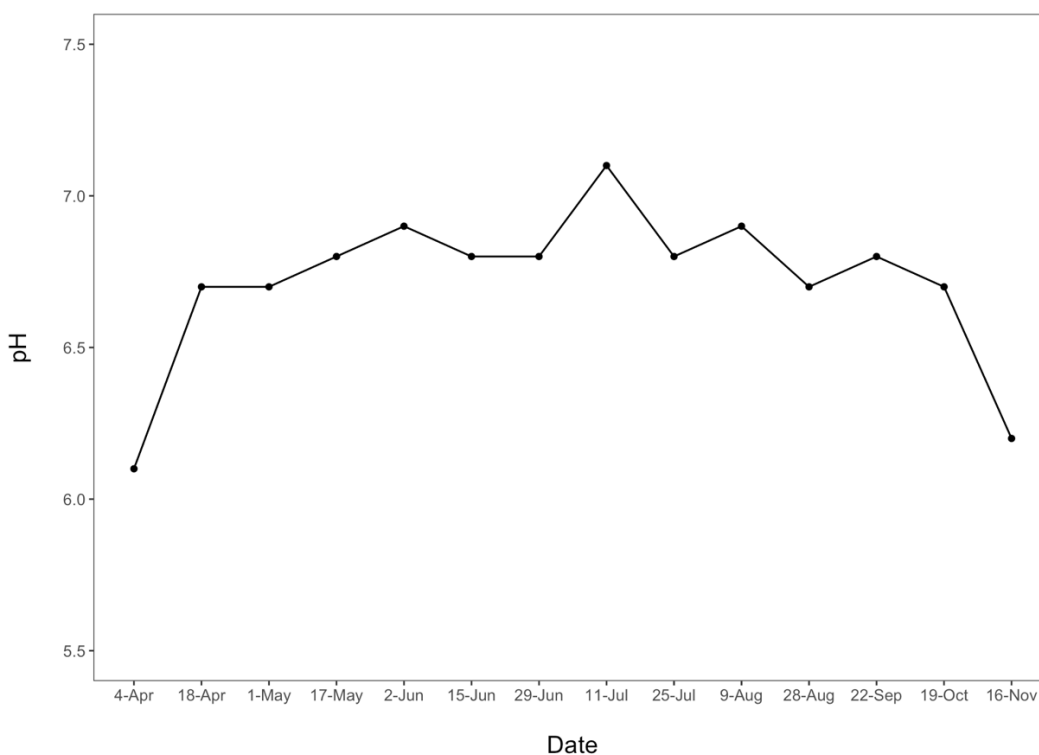

Figure 8. Change in Rogers Lake epilimnetic pH from April to November 2023.

5.4 Conductivity

Lake conductivity is the measurement of the electrical conductivity of the water. Conductivity measurements provide insights into the presence of dissolved ions, salts, pollutants, nutrients, and other substances.

Conductivity during the 2023 sampling period was 59 µS/cm during April and early May. It increased to 66-69 µS/cm for most of the summer except for a drop in August. It decreased again in the fall to 59 µS/cm as the lake began to mix (Figure 9). These values are similar to other lakes in the region. The observed fluctuations throughout the year are typical, likely the result of rainfall, temperature changes, and lake mixing. Conductivity measurements were similar to 2022. The Post lab did not measure conductivity before 2022.
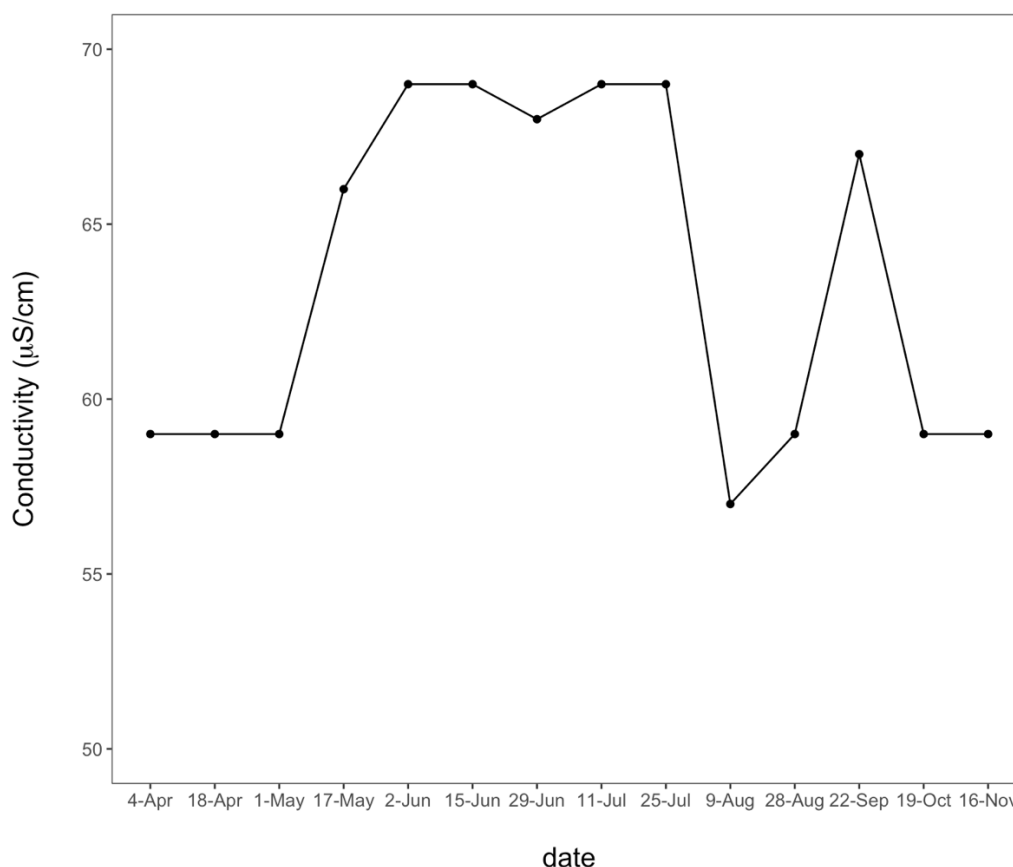

Figure 9. Change in Rogers Lake epilimnetic conductivity from April to November 2023.

5.5 Secchi Disk Transparency

The Secchi disk is a tool to measure turbidity (clarity) in bodies of water. It is used to assess overall water quality and the presence of suspended particles or algae. The secchi disk is lowered into the lake to a depth when it is no longer visible. This point is called the **secchi depth**, which will describe secchi disk transparency in the rest of this section. Secchi depth is measured in meters. Higher secchi depths indicate clearer water.

During the 2023 sampling period, mean annual secchi depth was 2.11 ± 0.23 m (Table 1). Mean monthly secchi depth ranged from 1.75 ± 0 m in September to 2.33 ± 0.14 m in June (Figure 10).

Mean annual secchi depth from 2005-2022 exhibited a gradual decrease with year, indicating a decrease in water clarity (Figure 12, Appendix III, Table 3.1). This trend continued in 2023 with the second lowest mean annual secchi depth measured from 2005-2023. Mean monthly secchi depth has decreased significantly with year in all months except October and November (Figure 11, Appendix II, Table 2.1). Frink and Norvell (1984) found secchi depths in Rogers Lake in 1979 and 1980 were 4.0 m.[6] This suggests the lake has seen a gradual reduction in water clarity over several decades.
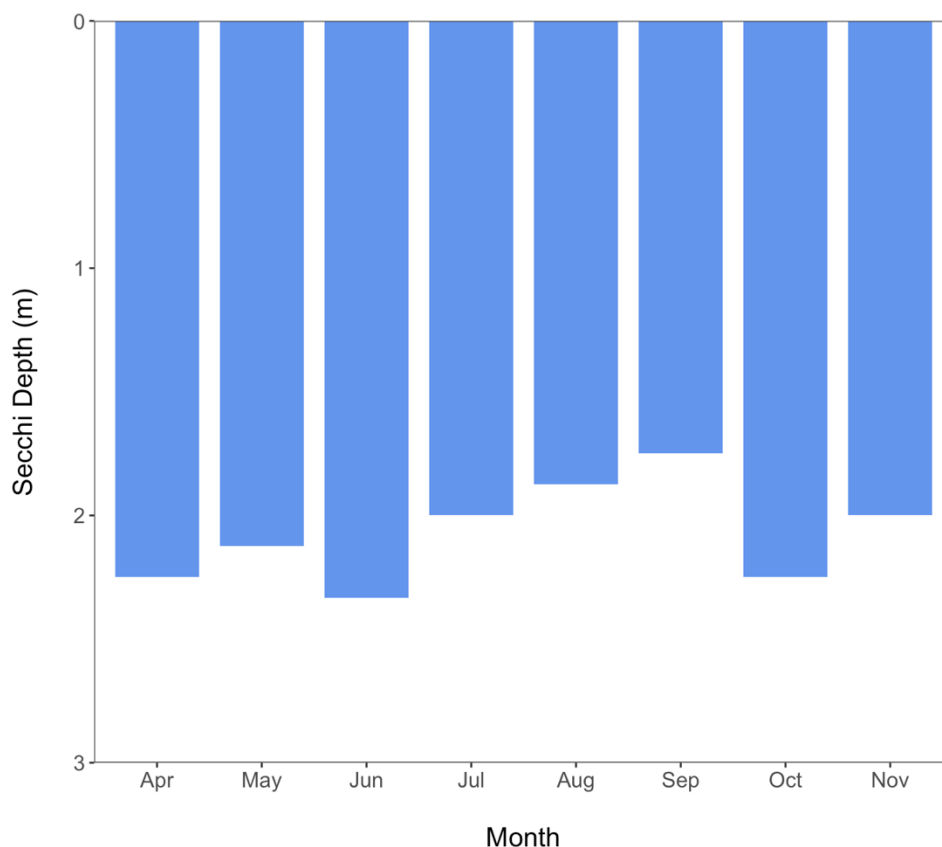

Figure 10. Mean monthly secchi depth in Rogers Lake from April to November 2023.
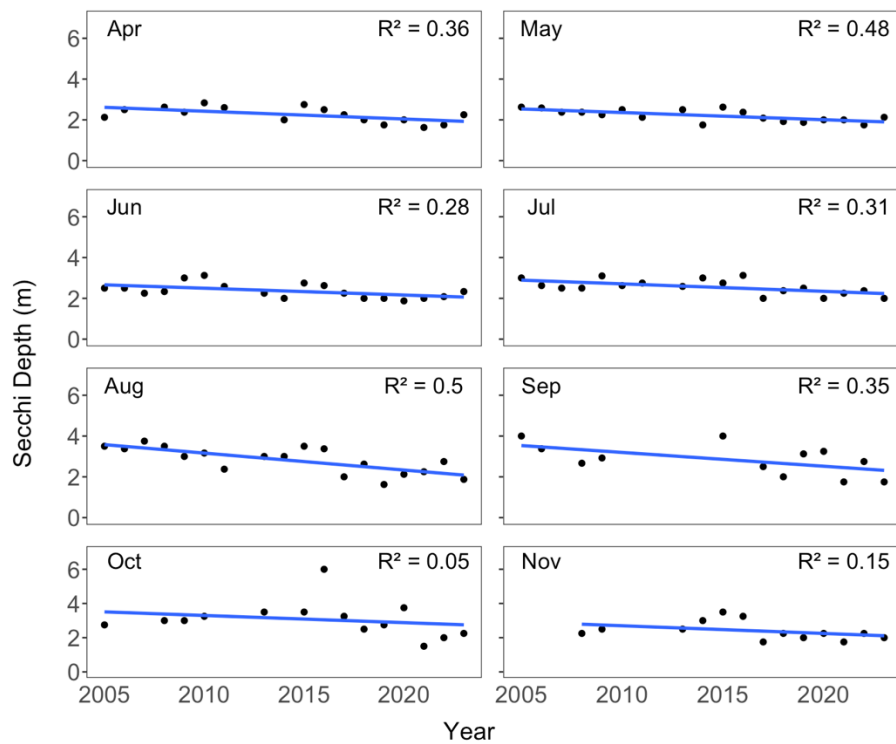
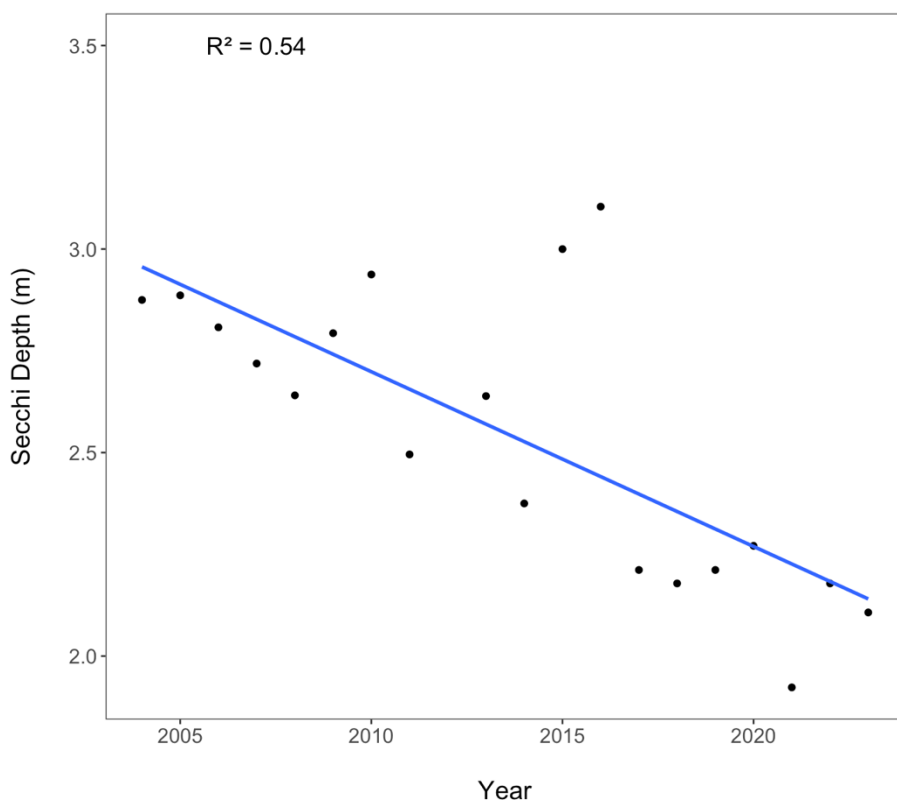**Figure 11.** Mean monthly secchi depth from 2005-2023.

Figure 12. Mean annual secchi depth from 2005-2023.

5.6 Chlorophyll-a

Chlorophyll-a is a pigment found in aquatic plants and algae that has long been used as a standard water quality indicator in freshwater systems. Chlorophyll-a measures the amount of algal biomass present.

During the 2023 sampling period, mean annual chlorophyll-a in the epilimnion was 7.83 ± 4.92 µg/L (Table 1). Mean monthly chlorophyll-a was lowest in November at 3.35 ± 0.00 µg/L and highest in September at 12.9 ± 0.00 µg/L (Figure 13).

Mean annual chlorophyll-a for 2023 was the highest concentration measured over the 2005-2023 sample database, largely attributed to spikes in August and September. This value is still within the range of mesotrophic lakes. There is now a statistically significant increase in mean monthly chlorophyll-a with year during the month of September (Figure 14, Appendix II, Table 2.1). Mean annual chlorophyll-a has yet to significantly change with time (Figure 15, Appendix III, Table 3.1).
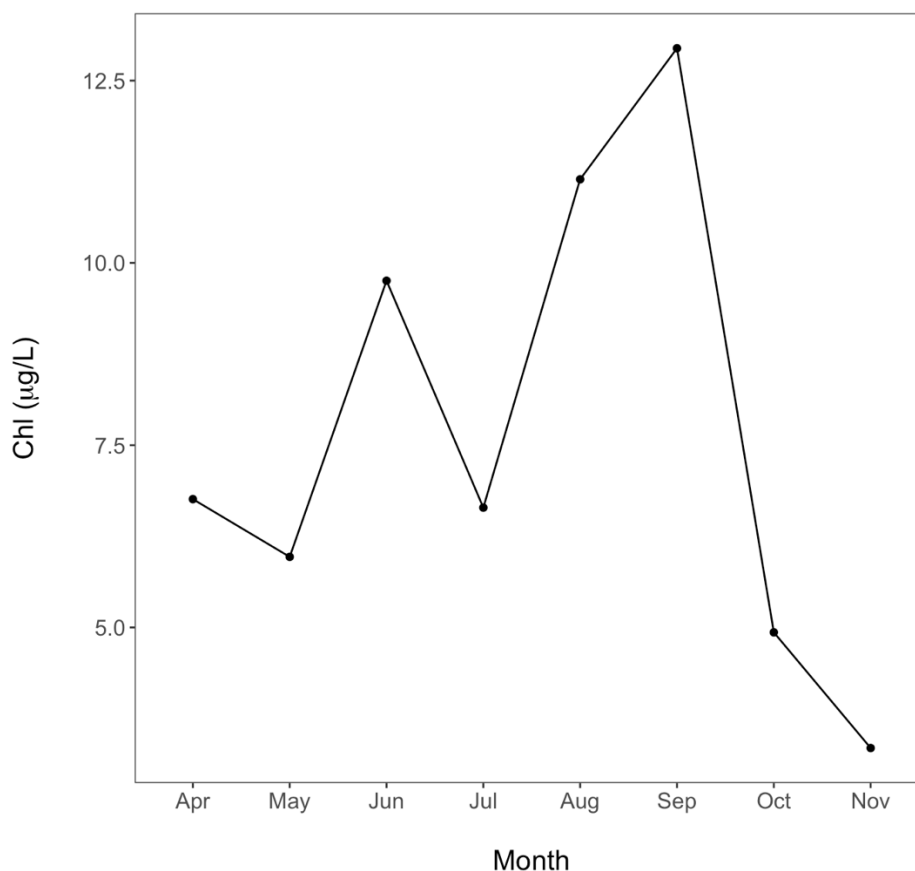

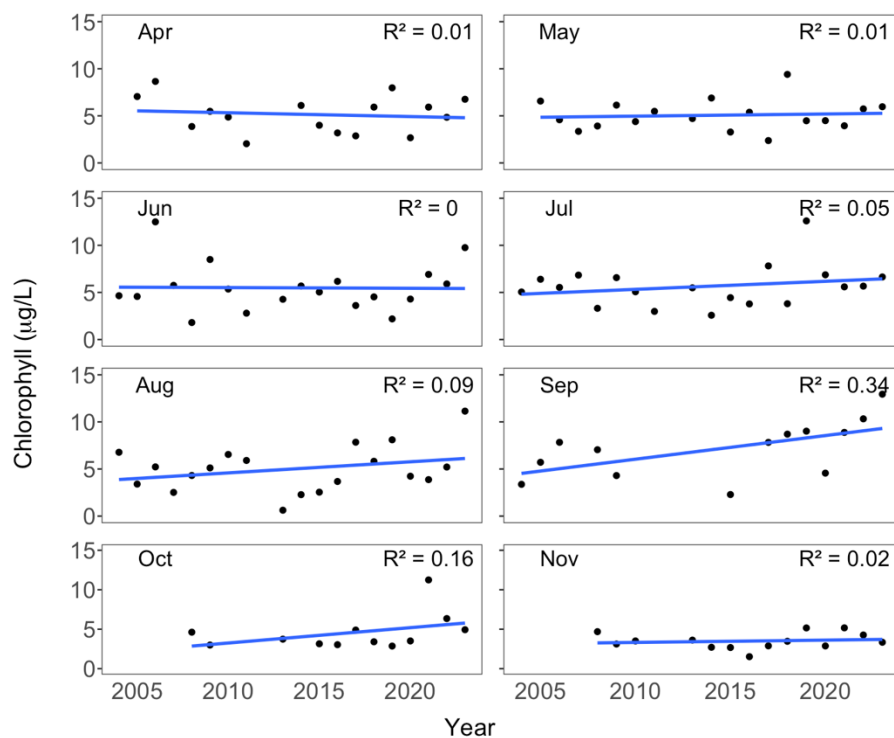**Figure 13.** Mean epilimnetic chlorophyll-a (Chl) by month in Rogers Lake in 2023.

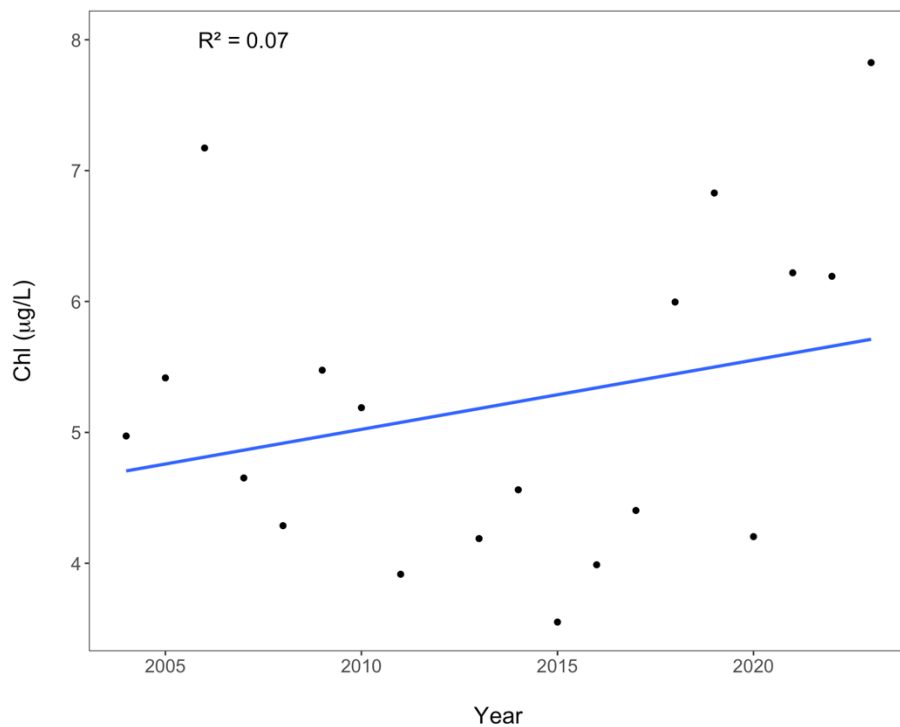**Figure 14.** Mean monthly epilimnetic chlorophyll-a (Chl) from 2005-2023.

Figure 15. Mean annual epilimnetic chlorophyll-a (Chl) from 2005-2023.

5.7 Total Phosphorus and Total Nitrogen

Phosphorus and nitrogen are the primary nutrients that drive the growth of plants and algae within aquatic ecosystems, serving as essential markers for assessing the trophic status of lakes. Phosphorus acts as the predominant limiting nutrient that influences the growth of aquatic plants and algae. Total phosphorus measures all forms of phosphorus present in the water. Nitrogen is the second most important nutrient affecting aquatic plant and algal growth. Total nitrogen measures all forms of nitrogen found present in the water. Increased phosphorus and nitrogen concentrations can lead to eutrophication, algal blooms, oxygen depletion, fish kills, and can have severe effects on the ecological health of the lake.

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual total phosphorus in the epilimnion was 17.21 ± 4.66 µg/L (Table 1). Mean monthly total phosphorus was lowest in November at 8.99 ± 0.00 µg/L and highest in July at 22.4 ± 4.29 µg/L (Figure 16).

Mean annual total phosphorus for 2023 was the highest concentration measured from 2005-2023. Mean monthly total phosphorus with year is increasing at a statistically significant rate for the months of July and August (Figure 17, Appendix II, Table 2.2). Mean annual total phosphorus is continuing to increase at a statistically significant rate with time (Figure 18, Appendix III, Table 3.1).
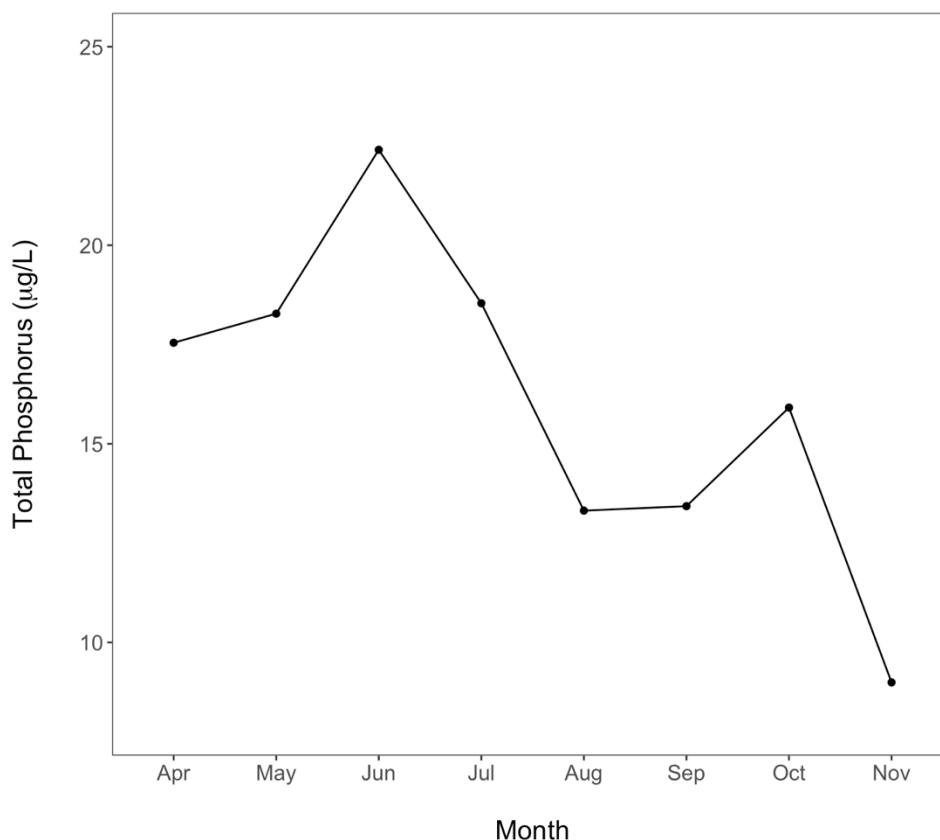

Figure 16. Mean monthly epilimnetic total phosphorus in Rogers Lake in 2023.
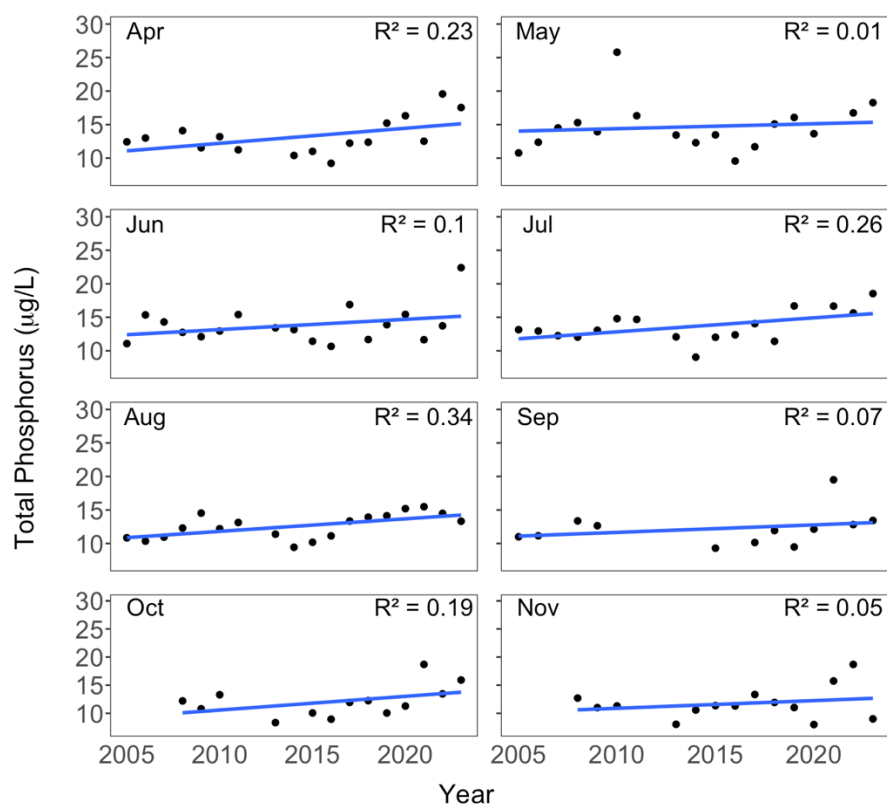
Figure 17. Mean monthly epilimnetic total phosphorus from 2005-2023.

Figure 18. Mean annual epilimnetic total phosphorus from 2005-2023.

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual total nitrogen in the epilimnion was 0.39 ± 0.11 mg/L (Table 1). Mean monthly total nitrogen was lowest in November at 0.26 ± 0.00 µg/L and highest in July at 0.53 ± 0.21 µg/L (Figure 19).

Mean annual total nitrogen for 2023 was the highest concentration measured from 2005-2023. Mean monthly total nitrogen increased at a statistically significant rate with year for the months of April, July, and October (Figure 20, Appendix II, Table 2.2). Mean annual total nitrogen is continuing to increase at a statistically significant rate with time (Figure 21, Appendix III, Table 3.1).

Figure 19. Mean monthly epilimnetic total nitrogen in Rogers Lake in 2023.

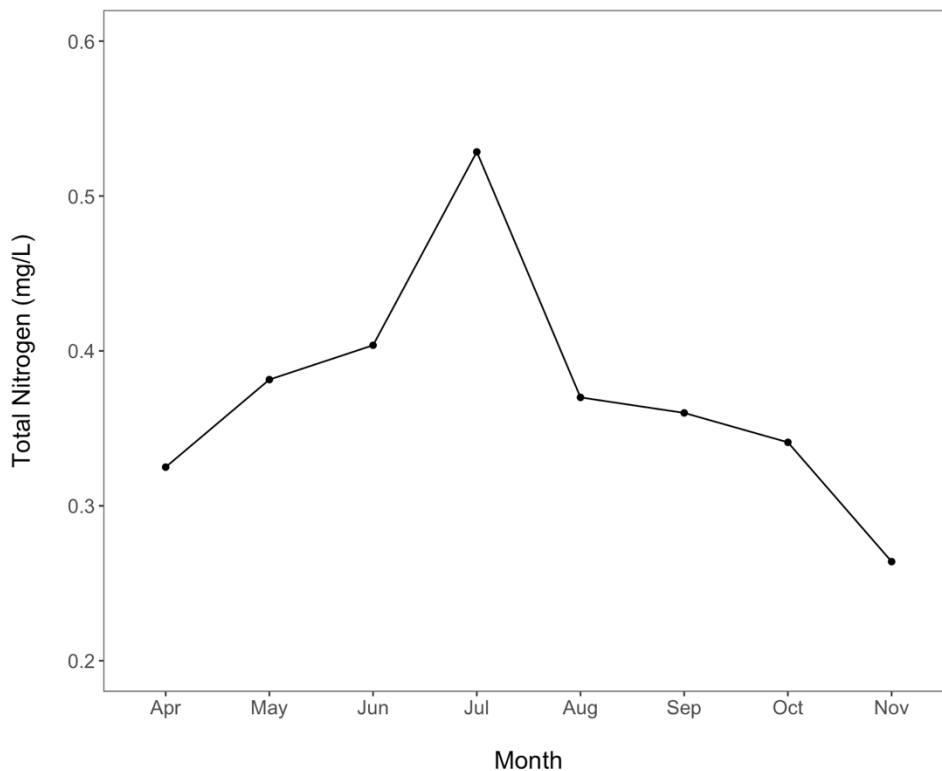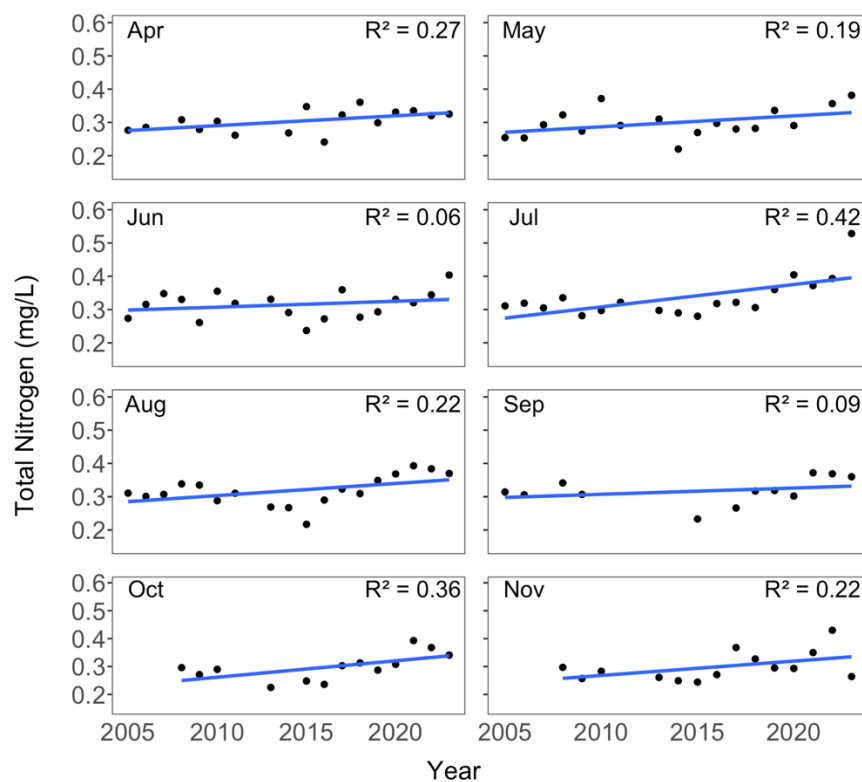**Figure 20.** Mean monthly epilimnetic total nitrogen from 2005-2023.
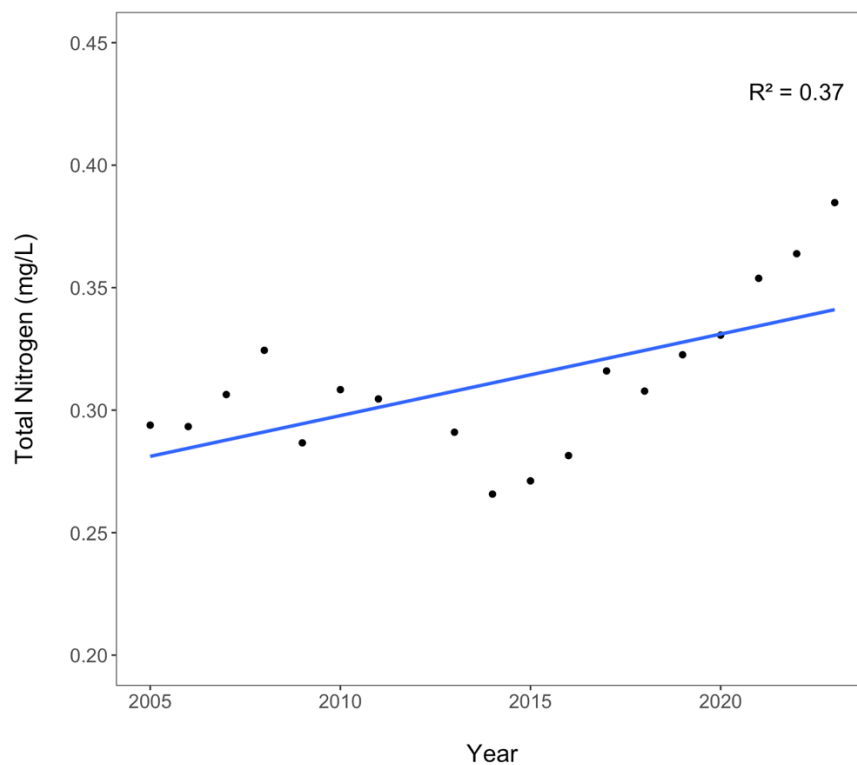

Figure 21. Mean annual epilimnetic total nitrogen from 2005-2023.

5.8 Nitrate-Nitrogen

Nitrate-Nitrogen is the nitrogen component of the nitrate anion. In water, it represents the amount of nitrogen available that is in the nitrate form. Nitrates are sources of nitrogen by aquatic plants in freshwater ecosystems. High levels can lead to algal blooms. When these algal blooms die and the algae is decomposed by bacteria, it can cause a rapid depletion in dissolved oxygen. Nitrate-nitrogen values are typically highest in lakes during spring and fall turnover.

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual nitrate-nitrogen in the epilimnion was 0.118 ± 0.030 mg/L (Table 1). Mean monthly nitrate-nitrogen was between 0.101 mg/L and 0.113 mg/L for all months except April when it was highest at 0.141 mg/L (Figure 22).

Mean monthly total nitrate-nitrogen and year show a statistically significant relationship in the month of July with values increasing. There are no significant relationships with other months. (Figure 23, Appendix II, Table 2.2). There is no significant relationship between mean annual nitrate-nitrogen and year. (Figure 24, Appendix III, Table 3.1).

Figure 22. Mean monthly nitrate-nitrogen in 2023 in Rogers Lake.

Figure 23. Mean monthly nitrate-nitrogen from 2014-2023.

Figure 24. Mean annual nitrate-nitrogen from 2014-2023.

5.9 Fluoride

Fluoride is an anion of fluorine. It occurs naturally in rocks, soil, minerals, and is found in low concentrations in freshwater, where it can be used as a micronutrient by plants and microorganisms. High fluoride concentrations can have toxic effects on vertebrates including fish and amphibians. In freshwater lakes fluoride toxicity can begin at 0.5 mg/L.[3]

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual fluoride in the epilimnion was 0.076 ± 0.004 mg/L (Table 5). Mean monthly fluoride ranged from 0.070 to 0.079 mg/L through the year (Figure 25).

There is no significant relationship between mean monthly fluoride (Figure 26) or mean annual fluoride with year from 2014-2023. (Figure 27). Fluoride was not sampled prior to 2014. Statistical results are provided in Appendix II, Table 2.1 and Appendix III, Table 3.1.

Figure 25. Mean monthly fluoride in Rogers Lake in 2023.

Figure 26. Mean monthly fluoride from 2014-2023.

Figure 27. Mean annual fluoride from 2014-2023.

5.10 Chloride

Chloride is a chemical ion of chlorine. It is found naturally in low concentrations in freshwater. Runoff from dissolved winter road salts can cause increased chloride concentrations in lakes. Chloride above 230 mg/L for prolonged periods can be toxic to freshwater organisms.[5]

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual chloride in the epilimnion was 7.99 ± 0.88 mg/L (Table 1). Mean monthly chloride ranged from 6.28 mg/L to 7.80 mg/L through the year (Figure 28).

There is no significant relationship of mean monthly chloride with year, except for the months of July and October which show decreases (Figure 29). There is no significant relationship between mean annual chloride and year from 2014-2023. (Figure 30). Chloride was not sampled prior to 2014. Statistical results are provided in Appendix II, Table 2.1 and Appendix III, Table 3.1.

Figure 28. Mean monthly chloride in Rogers Lake in 2023.

Figure 29. Mean monthly chloride from 2014-2023.

Figure 30. Mean annual chloride from 2014-2023.

5.11 Bromide

Bromide is a naturally occurring ion of bromine that is found in freshwater ecosystems, usually in very low concentrations. Its primary source in lakes is erosion of rock, but runoff from urban areas where some types of pesticides are used can cause elevated levels. Normal levels of bromide in freshwater systems are less than 0.2 mg/L.[7]

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual bromide in the epilimnion was 0.035 ± 0.002 mg/L (Table 5). Mean monthly bromide ranged from 0.025 mg/L to 0.036 mg/L through the year (Figure 31).

There is no significant relationship between mean monthly bromide (Figure 32) or mean annual bromide with year from 2014-2023. (Figure 33). Bromide was not sampled prior to 2014. Statistical results are provided in Appendix II, Table 2.1 and Appendix III, Table 3.1.
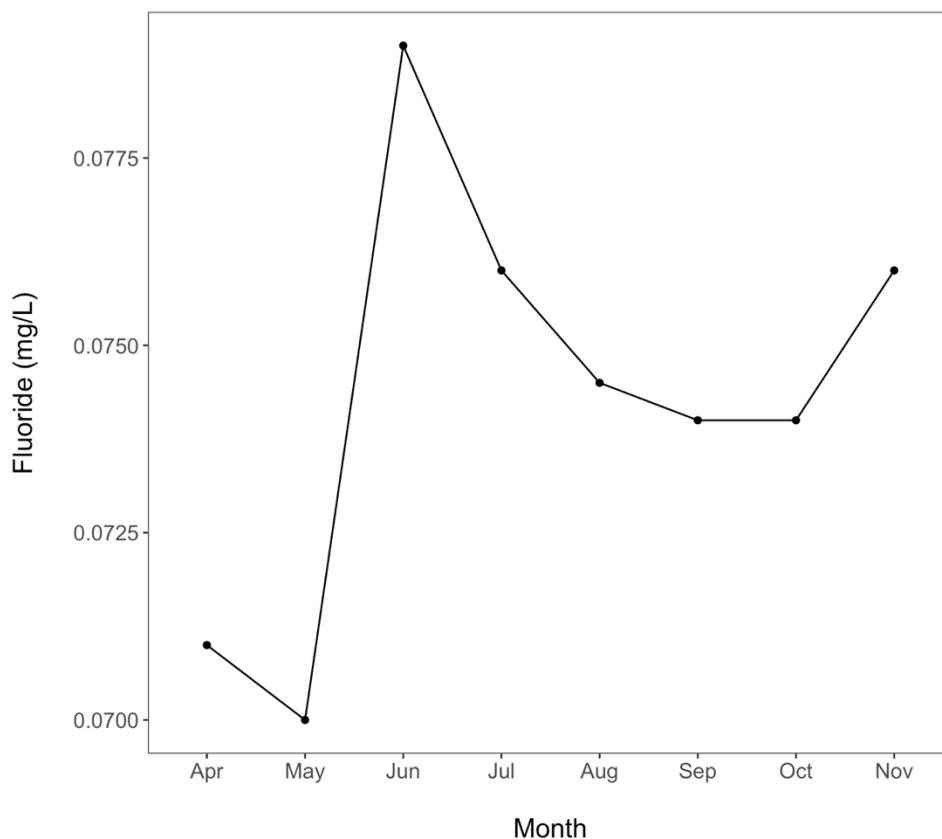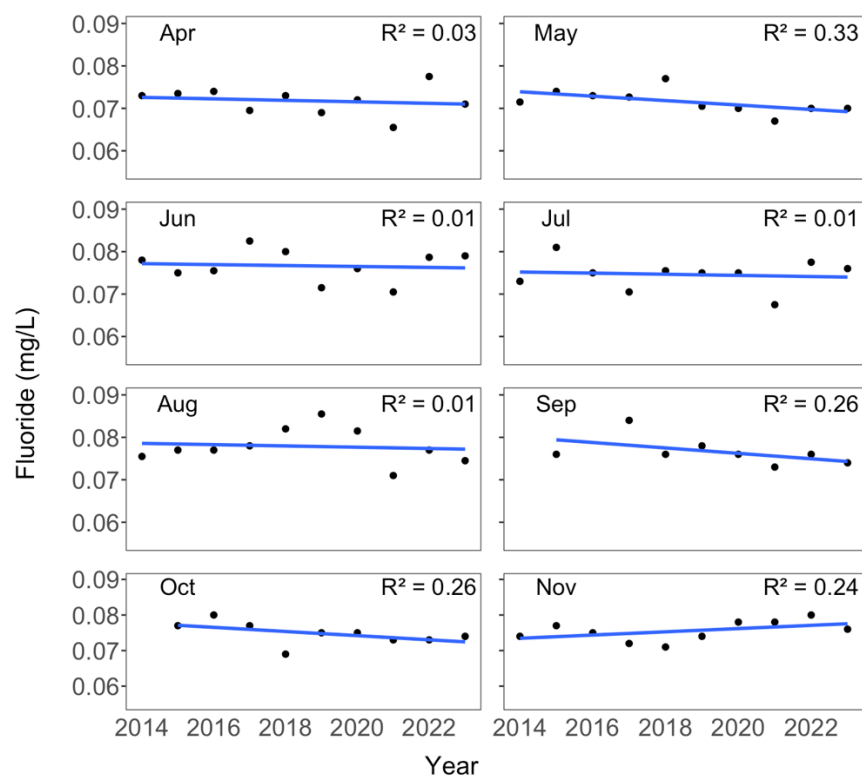

Figure 31. Mean monthly bromide in Rogers Lake in 2023.
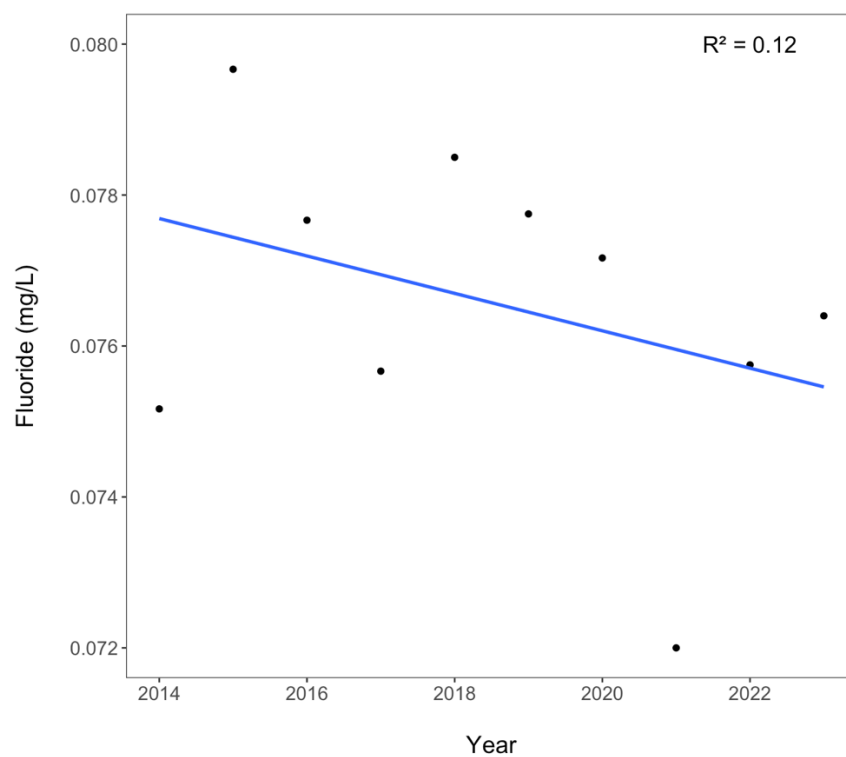
Figure 32. Mean monthly bromide from 2014-2023.

Figure 33. Mean annual bromide from 2014-2023.

5.12 Sulfate

Sulfate is a chemical ion composed of sulfur and oxygen. It occurs naturally in freshwater. High levels of sulfate are generally not toxic but can contribute to the formation of hydrogen sulfide, which can be toxic to some aquatic organisms at high levels. Typical sulfate concentrations in lakes range from 0-250 mg/L[8].

During the during 2023 sampling period, mean annual sulfate in the epilimnion was 4.74 ± 0.59 mg/L (Table 5). Mean monthly sulfate ranged from 3.79 mg/L to 5.14 mg/L through the year (Figure 34).

There is no significant relationship of mean monthly sulfate and year, except for the month of October where there is a decrease (Figure 35). There is no significant relationship between mean annual sulfate and year from 2014-2023. (Figure 36). Sulfate was not sampled prior to 2014. Statistical results are provided in Appendix II, Table 2.1 and Appendix III, Table 3.1.
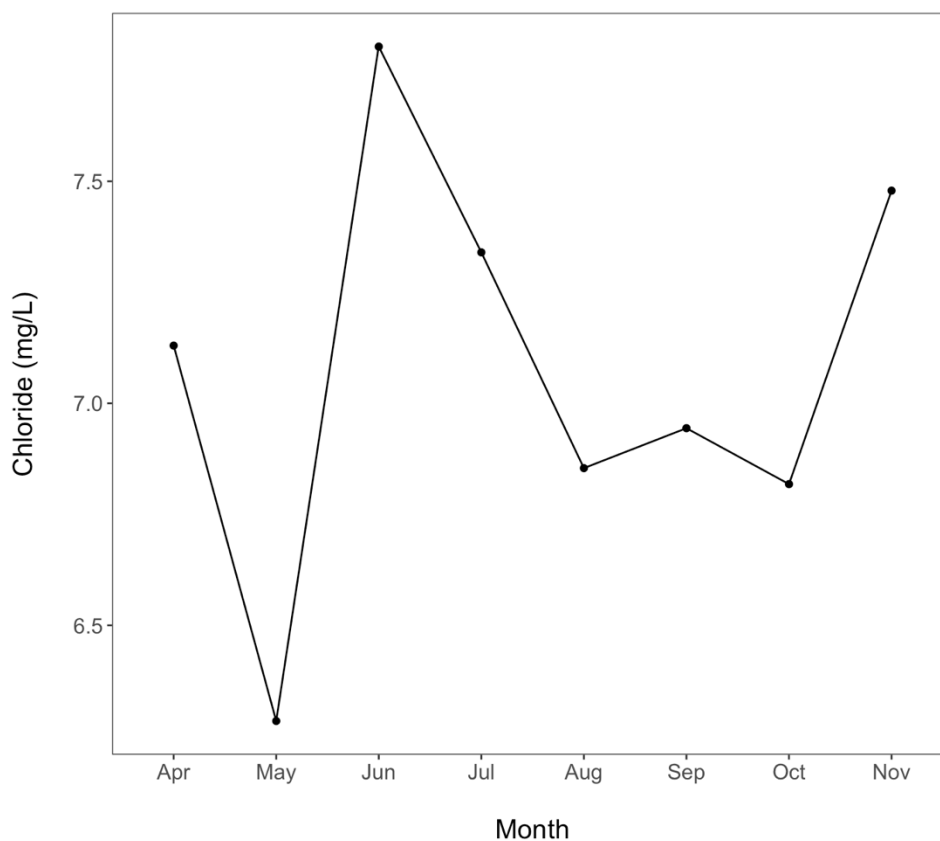

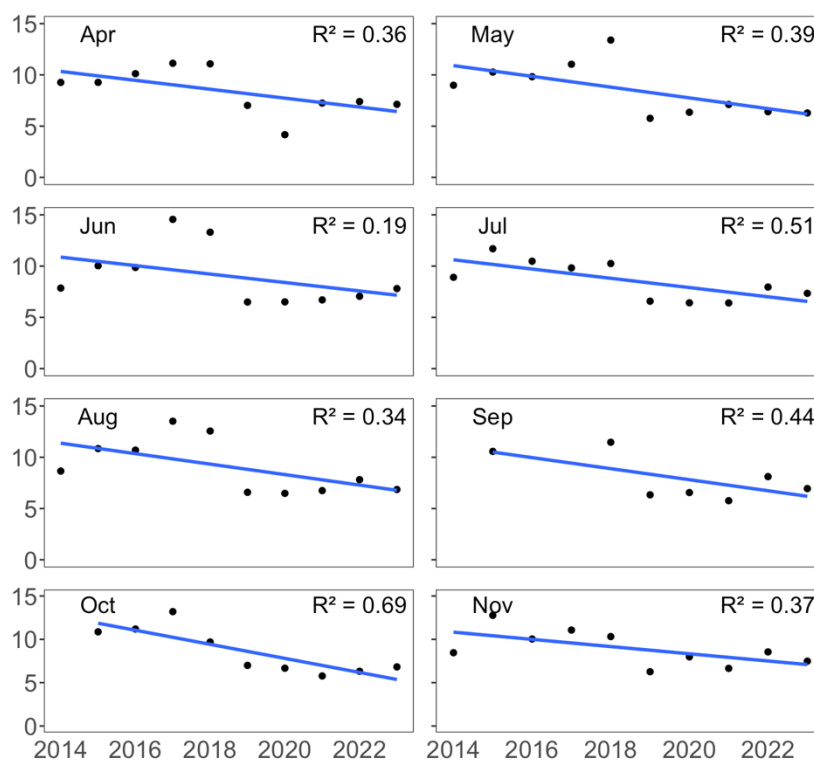**Figure 34.** Mean monthly sulfate in Rogers Lake in 2023.

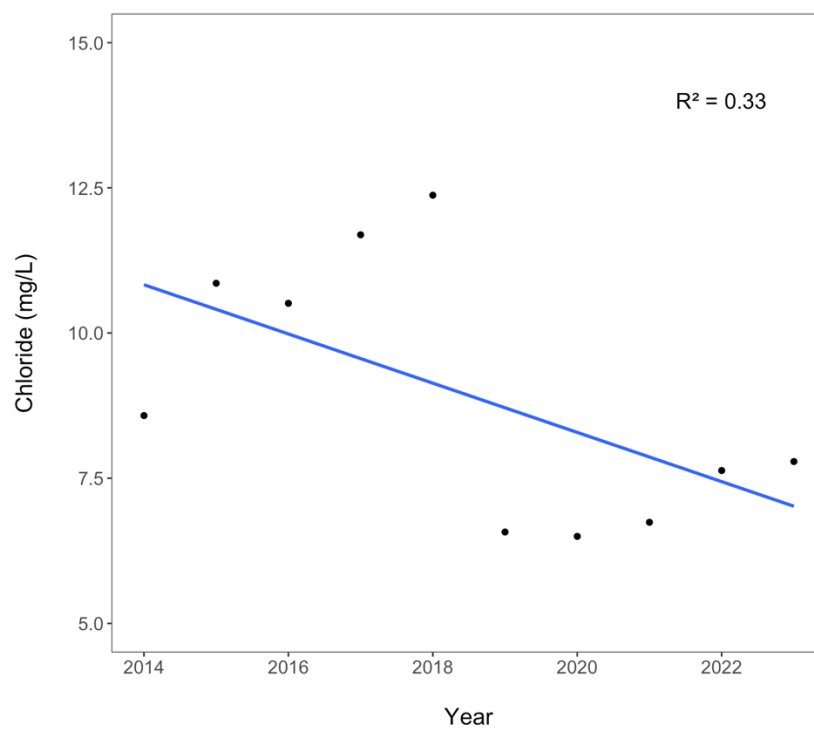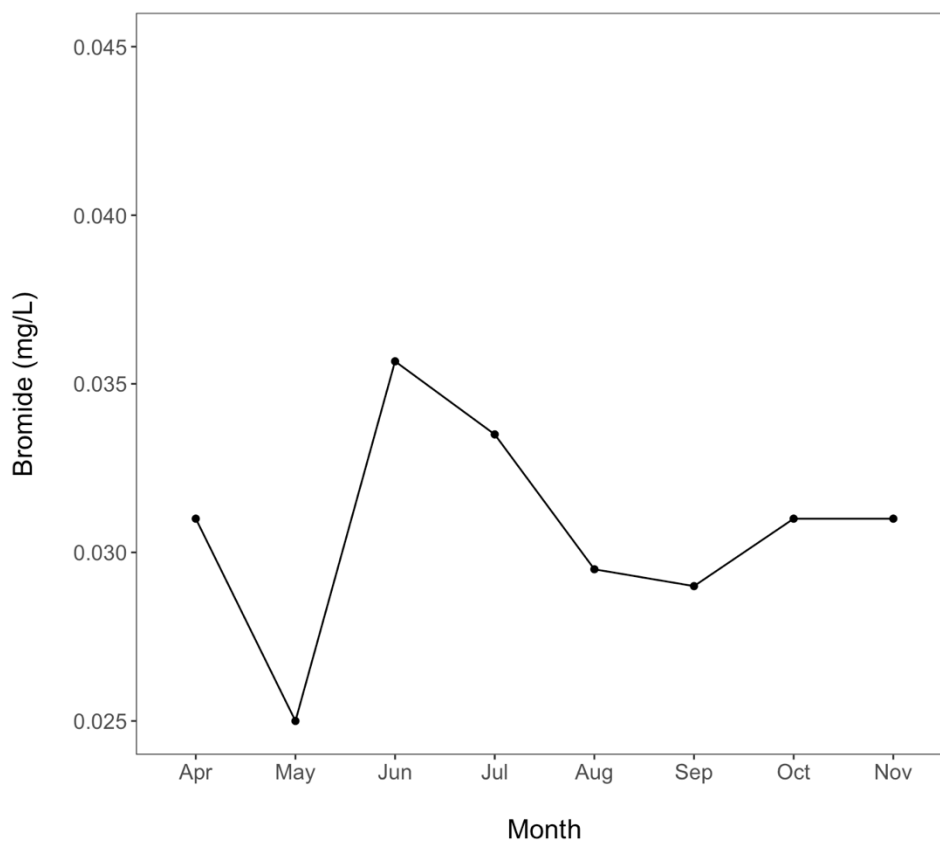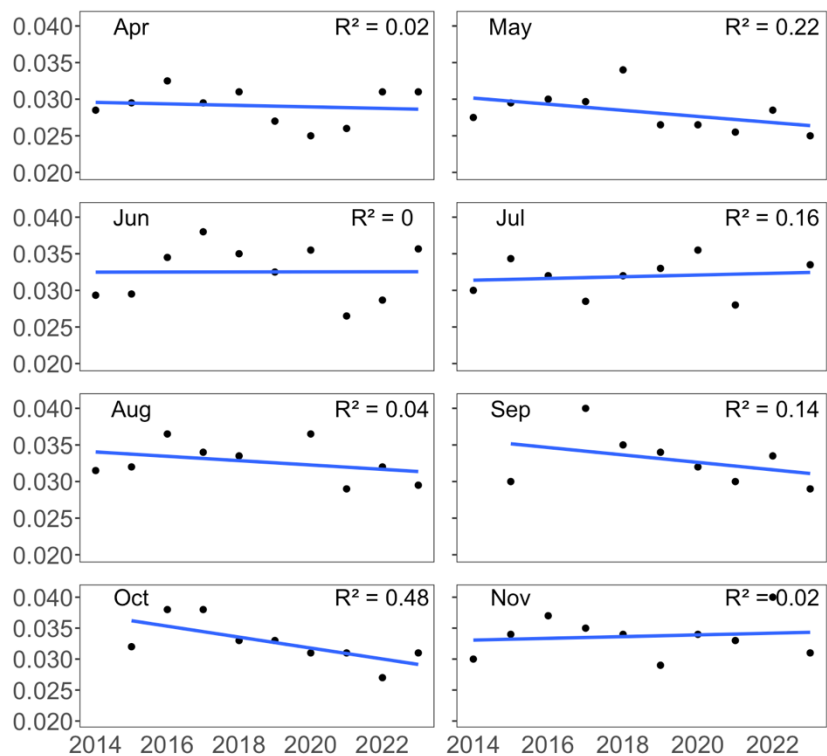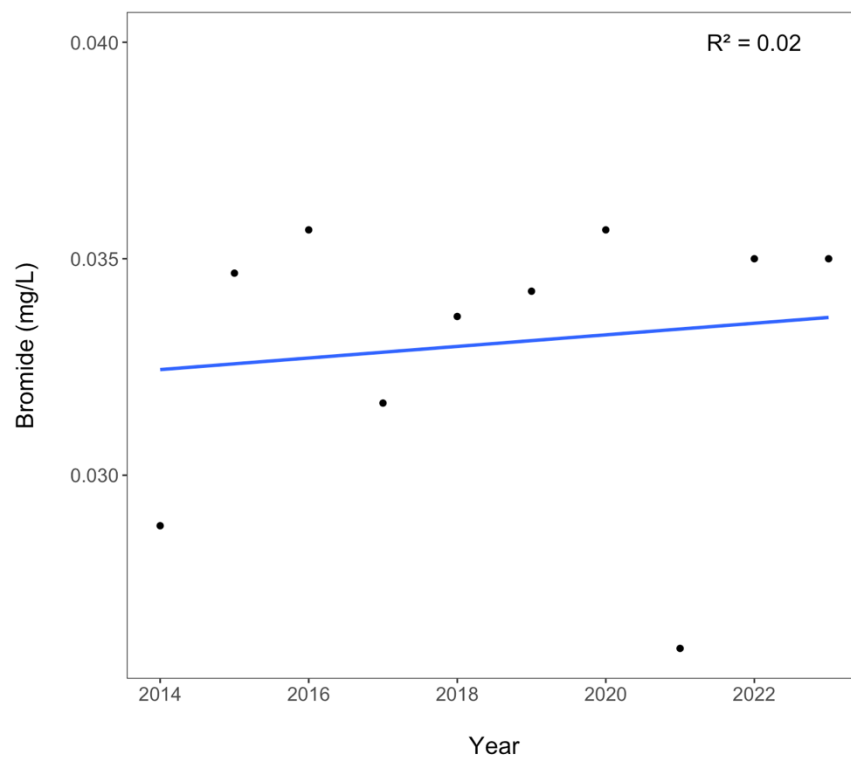**Figure 35.** Mean monthly sulfate from 2014-2023.

Figure 36. Mean annual sulfate from 2014-2023.

6. RESULTS SUMMARY

Rogers Lake is in good ecological health and most parameters measured were stable through time. However, Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus are continuing to increase with year, Chlorophyll-a and Nitrate-Nitrogen are increasing in summer months, and Secchi Disk Transparency is continuing to decrease with year. These trends suggest Rogers Lake may slowly transition to a eutrophic state.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) has established Water Quality Standards for lake nutrients.[2] Lakes are categorized by trophic state as Oligotrophic, Mesotrophic, Eutrophic, or Highly Eutrophic based on their defining ranges of total phosphorus, total nitrogen, chlorophyll-a and secchi depth transparency. Ranges and definitions for these lake states can be found in Tables 3 and 4. The measured values for these four parameters for Rogers Lake since 2005 all fall within the ranges of a Mesotrophic lake.

Table 5 contains the mean annual values for all water quality parameters and their trends through time. For this report, parameters that did not change *statistically* significantly with year were referred to as "stable".

Table 3. Parameters and defining ranges for the trophic state of lakes in Connecticut.[2]

Category	Total Phosphorus (µg/L)	Total Nitrogen (mg/L)	Chlorophyll-a (µg/L)	Secchi Disk Transparency (Meters)
Oligotrophic	0-10	0-0.2	0-2	6+
Mesotrophic	10-30	0.2-0.6	2-15	2-6
Eutrophic	30-50	0.6-1.0	15-30	1-2
Highly Eutrophic	50+	1.0+	30+	0-1

Note: Defining ranges for total phosphorus and total nitrogen are for spring and summer. Chlorophyll-a and secchi disk transparency are for mid-summer.

Table 4. Definitions of each trophic lake state.[2]

Category	Definition
Oligotrophic	Water is low in plant nutrients and with low biological productivity characterized by the absence of macrophyte beds.
Mesotrophic	Water is moderately enriched with plant nutrients and with moderate biological productivity characterized by intermittent blooms of algae or small areas of macrophyte beds.

Eutrophic	Water is highly enriched with plant nutrients and with high biological productivity characterized by occasional blooms of algae or extensive areas of dense macrophyte beds.
Highly Eutrophic	Water is excessively enriched with plant nutrients and with high biological productivity, characterized by severe blooms of algae or extensive areas of dense macrophyte beds.

Table 5. Mean annual values for Rogers Lake water quality parameters for 2023, 2022, and long-term trends.

Parameter	Mean Annual Value for 2023	Mean Annual Value for 2022	Long-term Trends
Temperature	20.0 ± 5.94 °C	20.1 ± 6.56 °C	Stable
Dissolved Oxygen	8.49 ± 1.20 mg/L	8.92 ± 1.21 mg/L	Decreasing in summer
Secchi Disk Transparency	2.11 ± 0.23 m	2.18 ± 0.41 m	Decreasing
Chlorophyll-a	7.83 ± 4.92 µg/L	6.19 ± 4.99 µg/L	Increasing in summer
Total Phosphorus	17.21 ± 4.66 µg/L	15.52 ± 2.74 µg/L	Increasing
Total Nitrogen	0.39 ± 0.11 mg/L	0.36 ± 0.03 mg/L	Increasing
Nitrate-Nitrogen	0.118 ± 0.030 mg/L	0.106 ± 0.003 mg/L	Increasing in summer
pH	6.71 ± 0.26	6.67 ± 0.32	Stable
Conductivity	63.4 ± 4.99 µS/cm	65.2 ± 5.26 µS/cm	Stable
Bromide	0.035 ± 0.002 mg/L	0.037 ± 0.009 mg/L	Stable
Chloride	7.99 ± 0.88 mg/L	7.74 ± 0.41 mg/L	Stable
Fluoride	0.076 ± 0.004 mg/L	0.075 ± 0.004 mg/L	Stable
Sulfate	4.74 ± 0.59 mg/L	4.35 ± 0.25 mg/L	Stable

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Dissolved Oxygen concentrations are showing a decline across years in summer months, especially measurements from the month of July since 2019. The Post Lab notes aquatic herbicide was used in Rogers Lake in July 2023. The RLA may choose to review procedures and timing of application of aquatic herbicides. These herbicides cause increased biological oxygen demand, which can deplete dissolved oxygen. Dissolved oxygen is already lowest in summer months and these increased demands can cause sudden crashes affecting the entire lake. Application of these herbicides earlier in spring may reduce oxygen depletion.

The RLA can continue to maintain or improve water quality by following a few general good environmental practices for homeowners surrounding the lake, including judicious and appropriately timed lawn fertilizers application, properly maintaining septic systems, using phosphate-free detergents, and planting vegetation buffers around the lake.

In addition, there are several invasive species inhabiting Rogers Lake, including: freshwater jellyfish (*Craspedacusta sowerbi*) (personal observation), Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) (personal observation), curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), variable-leaf watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum Michx.*), and fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*)[1]. Invasive species pose a significant threat to ecosystem health and recreational opportunities in Rogers Lake. Efforts should continue to educate the public on invasive species spread prevention and boat inspections should be continued and expanded to help prevent additional invasive species from entering the lake.

Continued water quality sampling of Rogers Lake is recommended to track changes and to see if trends continue.

8. REFERENCES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appendix I. Basic Statistics Guide

This report uses basic statistical analyses to examine how water quality parameters are changing with time. We have included a brief explanation of key statistical terms to facilitate interpretation of the results.

Linear regression

Linear regression is a way to understand and predict how one variable changes as another variable changes. It provides a simple way to understand and quantify relationships between two variables using a straight line. Linear regression is a foundational concept in statistics and data analysis, often used for making predictions and understanding patterns.

R^2

R-squared, often called the "coefficient of determination," gives an idea of how well a statistical model (like a linear regression model) fits the data points. It is a number between 0 and 1. Higher values mean the model explains more of the variation in the data, while lower values mean it explains less. Values from 0 to 0.3 represent a poor fit, 0.4 to 0.60 a moderate fit, and 0.70 to 1 a strong fit of the model to the data.

β (beta)

In linear regression, β (beta) represents the slope or the change in the dependent variable (y) for a one-unit change in the independent variable (x). It explains how much the dependent variable is expected to change when the independent variable changes by one unit, while keeping other variables constant. In simpler terms, β shows the relationship and direction of change between the variables in a straight-line equation.

p-value

A p-value helps us figure out if research results are meaningful or due to chance. A low p-value suggests real significance, while a high one implies randomness. In this report, a threshold of $p < 0.05$ was used to decide if results of the linear regression were statistically significant. It is important to remember that p-values are only one tool to explore the data. A statistically significant/insignificant result **may not always be biologically meaningful,** especially when the model fits poorly and the observed change in the variable of interest is miniscule**.**

Appendix II. Linear regression results for mean monthly values for all water quality parameters.

Table 2.1 Linear regression results of mean monthly temperature, dissolved oxygen, secchi depth, and chlorophyll-a with year.

Variable	Month	DF	F	R^2	β	p-value
Temperature	Apr	(1,13)	0.49	0.04	-0.06	0.50
	May	(1,16)	0.00	0.00	$3.9e^{-3}$	0.95
	Jun	(1,17)	0.90	0.06	0.04	0.36
	Jul	(1,17)	1.63	0.09	0.05	0.22
	Aug	(1,16)	0.05	0.00	-0.01	0.82
	Sep	(1,11)	0.19	0.02	0.03	0.67
	Oct	(1,11)	0.19	0.02	0.06	0.67
	Nov	(1,12)	0.22	0.02	0.05	0.65
Dissolved Oxygen	Apr	(1,13)	1.14	0.08	-0.03	0.30
	May	(1,16)	0.12	0.01	0.01	0.73
	Jun	(1,17)	0.59	0.03	-0.02	0.45
	Jul	(1,17)	4.66	0.22	-0.06	0.04*
	Aug	(1,17)	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.85
	Sep	(1,11)	0.71	0.06	-0.02	0.42
	Oct	(1,11)	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.84
	Nov	(1,12)	0.34	0.03	-0.03	0.57
Secchi Depth	Apr	(1,14)	7.74	0.36	-0.04	0.01*
	May	(1,16)	14.52	0.48	-0.04	<0.01*
	Jun	(1,17)	6.60	0.30	-0.03	0.02*
	Jul	(1,17)	6.45	0.27	-0.03	0.02*
	Aug	(1,17)	16.9	0.50	-0.07	< 0.01*

Variable	Month	DF	F	R^2	β	p-value
Temperature	Apr	(1,13)	0.49	0.04	-0.06	0.50
	May	(1,16)	0.00	0.00	$3.9e^{-3}$	0.95
	Jun	(1,17)	0.90	0.06	0.04	0.36
	Jul	(1,17)	1.63	0.09	0.05	0.22
	Aug	(1,16)	0.05	0.00	-0.01	0.82
	Sep	(1,11)	0.19	0.02	0.03	0.67
	Oct	(1,11)	0.19	0.02	0.06	0.67
	Nov	(1,12)	0.22	0.02	0.05	0.65
	Sep	(1,11)	5.94	0.35	-0.06	0.03*
	Oct	(1,12)	0.65	0.05	-0.04	0.44
	Nov	(1,11)	1.93	0.15	-0.04	0.19
Chlorophyll-a	Apr	(1,14)	0.21	0.01	-0.04	0.66
	May	(1,16)	0.11	0.01	0.02	0.75
	Jun	(1,17)	0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.94
	Jul	(1,17)	0.75	0.04	0.07	0.40
	Aug	(1,17)	1.58	0.09	0.12	0.23
	Sep	(1,11)	5.70	0.34	0.25	0.04*
	Oct	(1,10)	1.89	0.16	0.19	0.20
	Nov	(1,12)	0.23	0.03	0.02	0.64

* designates statistically significant results.

Table 2.2 Linear regression results of mean monthly nitrate-nitrogen, total nitrogen, and total phosphorus with year.

Variable	Month	DF	F	R^2	β	p-value
Nitrate-Nitrogen	Apr	(1,8)	0.14	0.02	$-1.3e^{-3}$	0.72
	May	(1,8)	1.87	0.24	$-1.6e^{-3}$	0.22
	Jun	(1,8)	0.14	0.03	$1.2e^{-3}$	0.73
	Jul	(1,8)	9.55	0.58	$5.5e^{-4}$	0.02*
	Aug	(1,8)	2.72	0.25	$3.5e^{-4}$	0.14
	Sep	(1,6)	0.69	0.10	$2.4e^{-4}$	0.44
	Oct	(1,7)	0.32	0.05	-3.7^{-4}	0.59
	Nov	(1,7)	0.09	0.01	$5.2e^{-4}$	0.77
Total Nitrogen	Apr	(1,16)	5.09	0.27	$3.0e^{-3}$	0.04*
	May	(1,15)	3.41	0.19	$3.3e^{-3}$	0.08
	Jun	(1,16)	1.03	0.06	$1.8e^{-3}$	0.33
	Jul	(1,16)	11.4	0.42	$6.7e^{-3}$	<0.01*
	Aug	(1,16)	4.48	0.22	$3.6e^{-3}$	0.05
	Sep	(1,10)	1.00	0.09	$1.9e^{-3}$	0.34
	Oct	(1,11)	6.22	0.36	$5.9e^{-3}$	0.03*
	Nov	(1,12)	3.40	0.22	$5.1e^{-3}$	0.09
Total Phosphorus	Apr	(1,14)	4.20	0.23	.23	0.06
	May	(1,15)	0.20	0.01	0.07	0.66
	Jun	(1,16)	1.84	0.10	0.15	0.19
	Jul	(1,15)	5.39	0.27	0.21	0.03*
	Aug	(1,16)	8.24	0.34	0.19	0.01*
	Sep	(1,10)	0.79	0.07	0.11	0.39

	Oct	(1,11)	2.50	0.19	0.24	0.14
	Nov	(1,12)	0.67	0.15	0.14	0.43

* designates statistically significant results

Table 2.3 Linear regression results of mean monthly chloride, bromide, fluoride, and sulfate with year..

Variable	Month	DF	F	R^2	β	p-value
Chloride	Apr	(1,8)	4.55	0.36	-0.43	0.07
	May	(1,8)	5.04	0.39	-0.53	0.06
	Jun	(1,8)	1.83	0.19	-0.41	0.21
	Jul	(1,8)	8.26	0.51	-0.45	0.02*
	Aug	(1,8)	4.18	0.34	-0.51	0.08
	Sep	(1,6)	4.65	0.44	-0.82	0.08
	Oct	(1,7)	15.9	0.07	-0.81	<0.01*
	Nov	(1,7)	4.78	0.37	-0.42	0.06
Bromide	Apr	(1,8)	0.13	0.02	$-1e^{-4}$	0.73
	May	(1,8)	2.3	0.22	$-4.1e^{-4}$	0.17
	Jun	(1,8)	$2.6e^{-4}$	$3.1e^{-5}$	$7.1e^{-6}$	0.99
	Jul	(1,8)	1.47	0.16	$5.1e^{-4}$	0.26
	Aug	(1,8)	0.29	0.04	$-2.4e^{-4}$	0.61
	Sep	(1,6)	1.01	0.14	$-5.1e^{-4}$	0.35
	Oct	(1,7)	6.4	0.48	$-8.8e^{-4}$	0.39
	Nov	(1,7)	0.14	0.02	$1.4e^{-4}$	0.72
	Apr	(1,8)	0.22	0.03	0.00	0.65
	May	(1,8)	3.93	0.33	0.00	0.33
	Jun	(1,8)	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.8

Fluoride	Jul	(1,8)	0.10	0.01	0.00	0.76
	Aug	(1,8)	0.10	0.01	0.00	0.76
	Sep	(1,6)	2.13	0.26	0.00	0.26
	Oct	(1,7)	2.5	0.26	0.00	0.16
	Nov	(1,7)	2.46	0.24	0.00	0.16
Sulfate	Apr	(1,7)	0.96	0.12	-0.11	0.36
	May	(1,8)	1.87	0.19	-0.16	0.21
	Jun	(1,8)	0.56	0.07	-0.10	0.48
	Jul	(1,8)	3.07	0.28	-0.09	0.12
	Aug	(1,8)	1.75	0.81	-0.10	0.23
	Sep	(1,6)	1.93	0.24	-0.20	0.21
	Oct	(1,7)	7.88	0.53	-0.19	0.03*
	Nov	(1,7)	0.68	0.08	-0.06	0.43

* designates statistically significant results

Appendix III. Linear regressions of mean annual values for all water quality parameters.

Table 3.1 Linear regression results of all mean annual values for water quality parameters with year.

Variable	DF	F	R^2	β	p-value
Temperature	(1,17)	0.12	0.01	-0.02	0.73
Dissolved Oxygen	(1,13)	6.12	0.32	-0.04	0.03*
Secchi Depth	(1,17)	20.12	0.54	-0.04	<0.01*
Chlorophyll-a	(1,17)	1.92	0.07	0.05	0.27
Nitrate-Nitrogen	(1,8)	0.23	0.00	$1.2e^{-4}$	0.88
Total Nitrogen	(1,16)	9.36	0.37	$3.3e^{-3}$	<0.01*
Total Phosphorus	(1,16)	5.11	0.24	0.15	0.04*
Bromide	(1,8)	0.13	0.02	$1.3e^{-4}$	0.73
Chloride	(1,8)	3.92	0.33	-0.42	0.08
Fluoride	(1,8)	1.14	0.12	$-2.5e^{-4}$	0.32
Sulfate	(1,8)	2.25	0.22	-0.13	0.17

* designates statistically significant results.