

Water Testing in Copeland Forest February 2024

Did you know that the Copeland Forest Friends Association (CFFA) has been testing the waters in Copeland Forest since the spring of 2016? Originally CFFA was part of the Couchiching Conservancy water testing program, but split off on its own in 2018. Currently testing occurs monthly at seven sites in the forest from spring to fall. Each site is the responsibility of two to three CFFA members who act as “citizen scientists”.



Water test results show the natural fluctuation of chemical components in the waters that flow from Copeland’s central wetlands into the Coldwater, Sturgeon and Nottawasaga Rivers. Testing includes: alkalinity, air and water temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, environmental observations, phosphate, pH, nitrate, and turbidity.

CFFA is partnered with the Severn Sound Environmental Association. SSEA was created under the Municipal Act and provides support to federal, provincial and local governments to sustain environmental quality, and to ensure protection of the Severn Sound and its tributaries. CFFA water testing data is shared with SSEA and is used in their reports and grant applications. This baseline data also helps CFFA monitor the impact of activities at Horseshoe Resort, Heights of

Horseshoe and nearby residential areas that could affect water quality in Copeland.



Lindsay Sargent and her two daughters Sophie and Payton have been testing for several years. “It is a great way to spend time together and with the beautiful waterways in the forest” says Lindsay

James Ross is CFFA's current Water Testing Coordinator, and has been involved with the program since 2016. He describes Copeland's water quality as very good and stable over the years.

All of the sites show the standard pattern of cold water temperatures in the spring, rising each summer, and then falling in the autumn. Dissolved oxygen levels start high in the spring, decrease during the summer, then climb again in the fall. There are occasional elevations in phosphate and



nitrate over the summer, but they tend to flush through and stabilize each fall. Turbidity is always clear except for momentary increases after a heavy rainfall. Alkalinity and pH remain constant as they are determined by the bedrock and soil characteristics.



If you are interested in being part of CFFA's water testing program contact us at: info@copelandfriends.ca. A scientific background is not required.

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