



Silver Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program

Technical Memorandum

Halifax, Plympton, Pembroke, and Kingston, Massachusetts

June 2023

2021-2022 Monitoring Results

Prepared For:

Central Plymouth County Water District Commission
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Central Plymouth County Water District Commission Public Meeting

*Presentation of Silver Lake Monitoring Program Key Findings and Next Steps
December 4, 2023*



**Central Plymouth
County Water
District Commission**

About The Central Plymouth County Water District Commission

- Established in 1964
- Serves Brockton, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plympton and Whitman
- Is empowered to investigate and allocate water supply sources within the District, study water supply needs and resources, and investigate “all pertinent matters” relating to water quantity and quality, water resources protection, and water supply and treatment infrastructure
- Is committed to ensuring safe, sustainable drinking water supplies, ecological health and recreational enjoyment within the Central Plymouth County Water District.



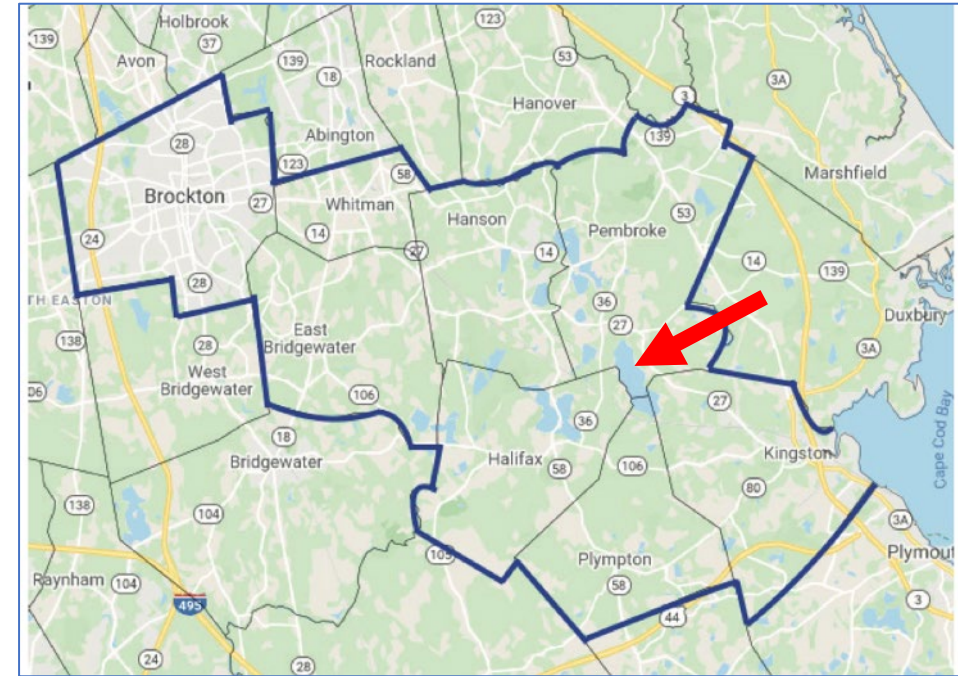
**Central Plymouth
County Water
District Commission**

Today's Outline

- Silver Lake background and project context
- TRC overview of key findings and recommended next steps
- Opportunity for participants to ask questions and provide feedback

Project Context

- Silver Lake is used for Public Water Supply and supports aquatic life
- The natural water flow to Silver Lake and associated waterbodies has been altered
- Silver Lake, East/West Monponsett Pond, Jones River, Eel River, Furnace Pond are all impaired by MassDEP
- MassDEP Phosphorus TMDL for Monponsett Pond
- Silver Lake is under stress from Diversions (Monponsett & Furnace Ponds) and polluted runoff
- Concerns prompted the Commission to initiate a Monitoring program in 2020 to understand the condition of the pond



**Central Plymouth
County Water
District Commission**

Overview of Silver Lake Monitoring Project Process

- TRC (under contract) – June 2021
- Public Involvement Plan – July 2021
- Draft Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) – August 2021
- **Public Meeting 1** (presentation of SAP and public comment) - August to September 2021
- Revised SAP– June 2022
- US EPA and MassDEP approved QAPP – May 2022
- Initiate Monitoring – August 2021, last sampling date – October 2022
- Additional sampling - September & October 2023
- Final Silver Lake Technical Memorandum Publicly Available – June 2023
- Formal Press Release – September 2023
- Submit Data to MassDEP for review and assessment – October 2023
- Addendum to Final Silver Lake Technical Memorandum – TBD
- **Public Meeting 2** – December 2023



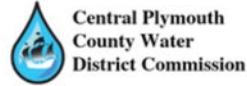
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Goals of the Silver Lake Monitoring Project

1. Develop an understanding of current water quality
2. Collect information needed inform community management decisions to address water quality and quantity issues in Silver Lake and connected water bodies



Central Plymouth County Water District Commission Resources Page



[Who We Are](#) [What We Do](#) [Why It Matters](#) [Projects](#) [Resources](#) [Meetings](#) [Contact](#)



- Silver Lake Public Information Tri-fold
- Silver Lake Technical Memorandum
- Silver Lake Monitoring Data Set
- All Commission Presentations/recordings
- Sampling and Analysis Plan
- Quality Assurance Project Plan
- Public Involvement Plan
- Project Schedule

<https://www.centralplymouthcountywater.org/water-quality-monitoring-at-silver-lake.html>

Purpose of Today

- Provide a summary of key technical findings and next steps
- Collect verbal feedback from you on Silver Lake Technical Memorandum findings and next steps
- Written comments from the public will help inform the next steps taken by the Commission



**Central Plymouth
County Water
District Commission**

To Provide Written Feedback

- Submit written comments to Frank Basler
(fbasler@plymouthcountyma.gov)

by January 15, 2024 at 5PM via email

Silver Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program

Summary of Project Findings and Next Steps

Central Plymouth County Water District Commission

December 2023



**Central Plymouth
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District Commission**

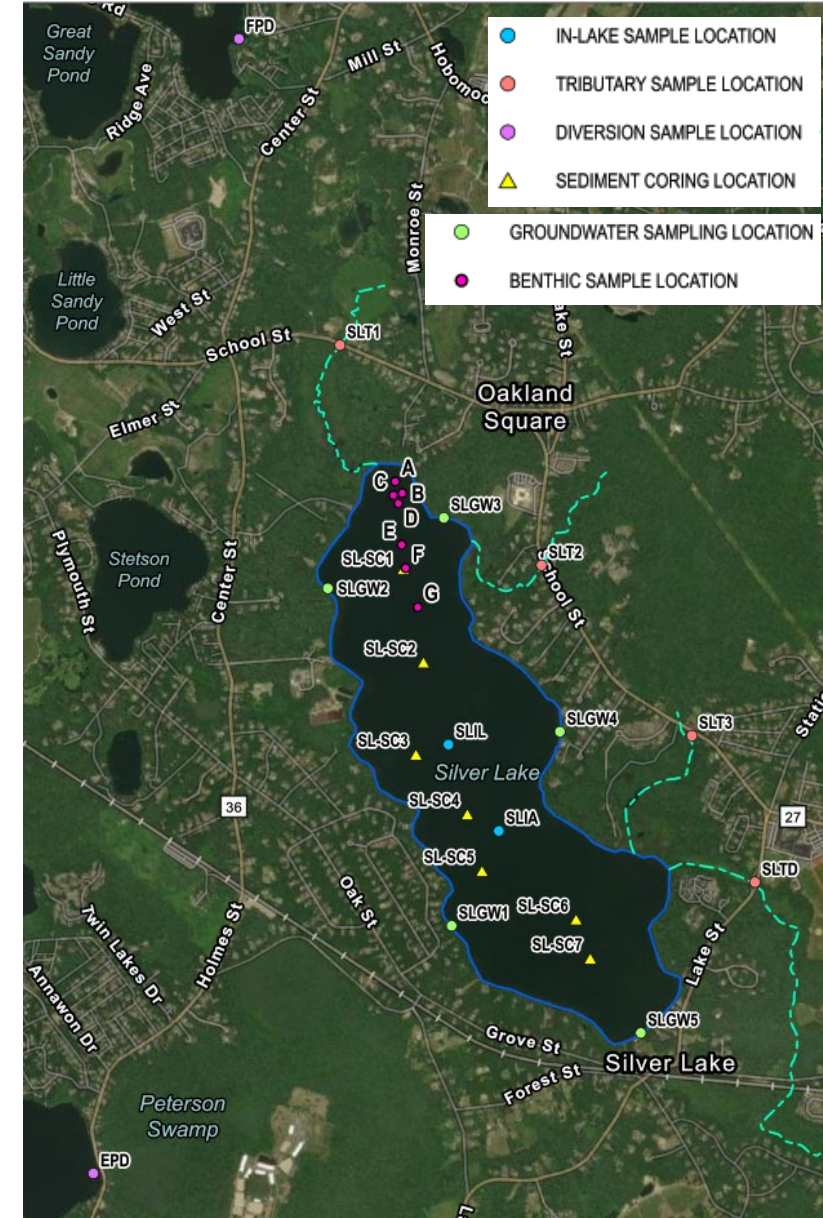
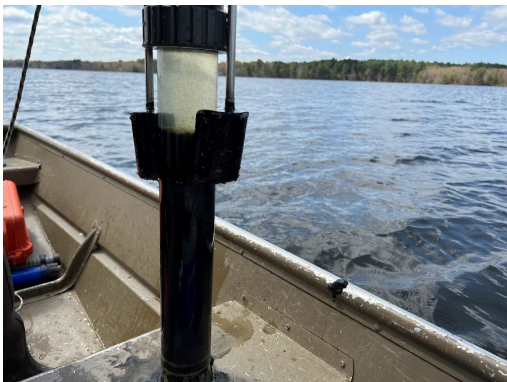
SUPPORTING

[DOING]

LEADING

Monitoring Program At-a-Glance

- 29 total sampling locations
 - 4 in-lake surface water locations
 - 4 tributary and outlet surface water locations
 - 2 diversion source surface water locations
 - 7 sediment coring locations
 - 5 shoreline groundwater locations
 - 7 benthic macroinvertebrate locations
 - Additional in-lake water depth and aquatic plant mapping locations
- Monthly visits from September 2021 to October 2022
- Continuous data loggers in Silver Lake and streams
- More than 88,000 data points collected over course of program



Technical Findings

Silver Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program

Technical Findings – Overview

Key findings from the 2021-2022 study period:

- Aquatic invasive plants present and widely distributed in Silver Lake
- Cyanobacteria common to dominant much of the year
- Cyanotoxins present at detectable concentrations each visit from November 2021 to June 2022
- Dissolved oxygen low or absent from bottom waters for several months of the year
- Sediments rich in phosphorus, including forms that readily release into the water column
- Nutrient levels elevated in water column

Technical Findings – Key Results: Plants

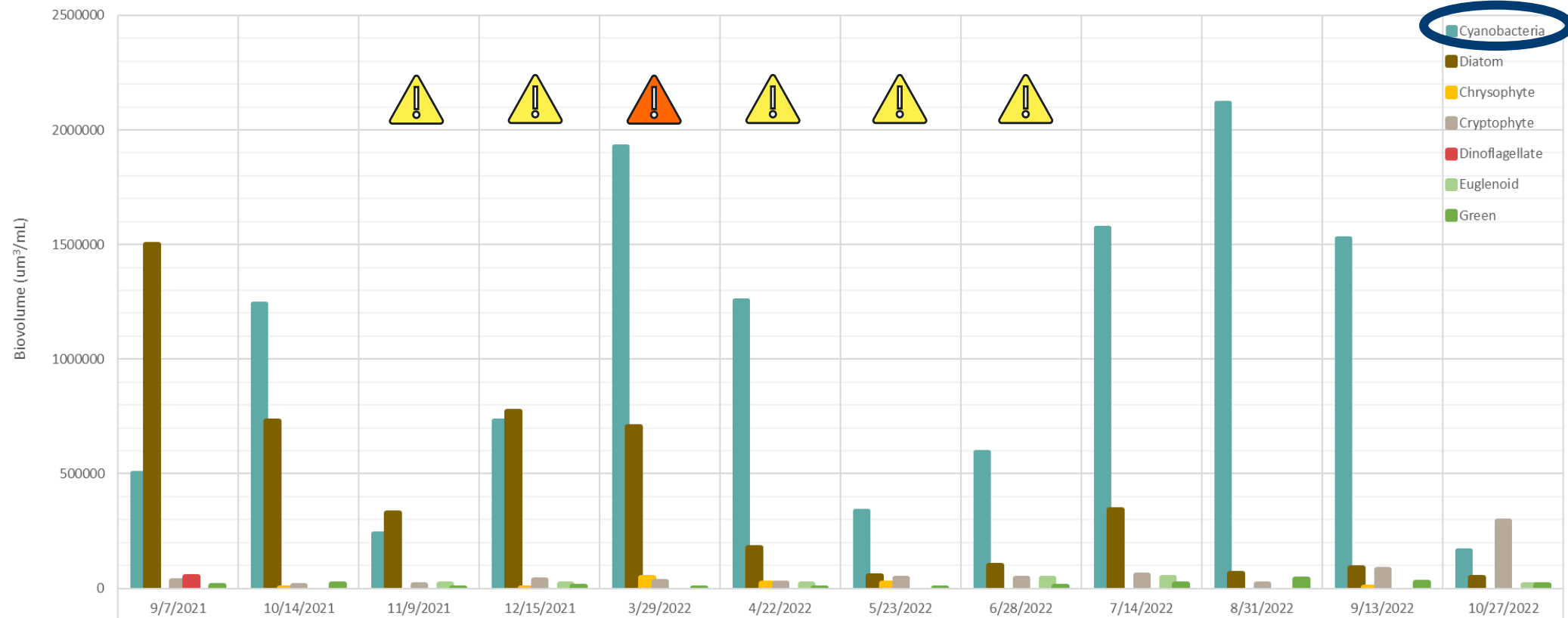
- Three aquatic invasive plants present
- Why are these an issue?
 - Large plants that outcompete native species and spread easily via fragmentation
 - Impact habitat for aquatic life
 - Contribute to eutrophication (nutrient enrichment)
 - May alter other water quality (e.g., dissolved oxygen) when abundant enough



Technical Findings – Key Results: Cyanobacteria and Cyanotoxins (2021-2022)

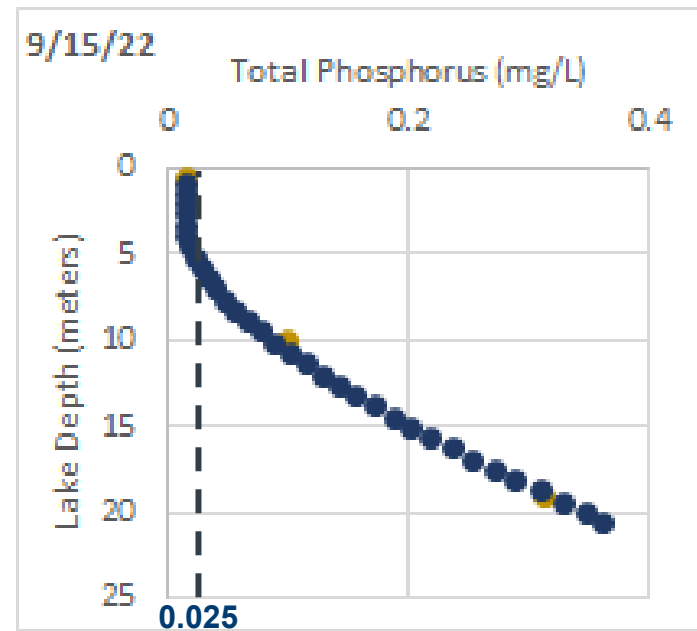
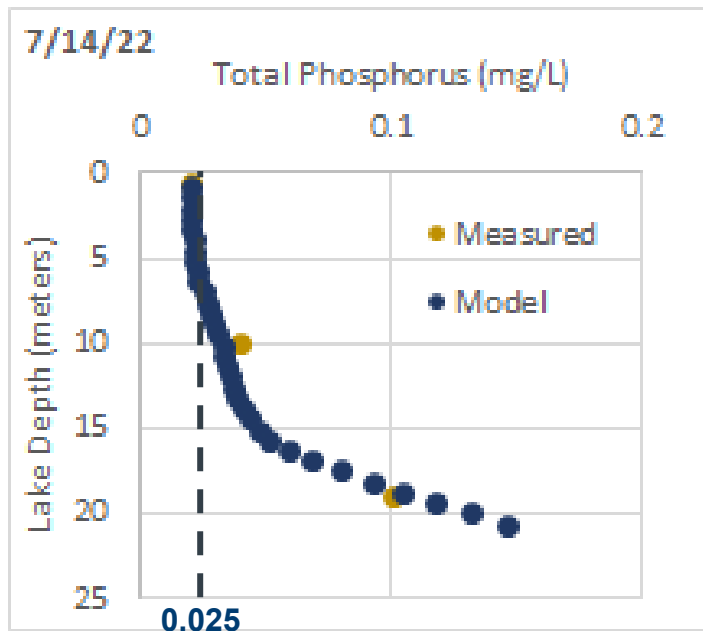
- Cyanobacteria common to dominant much of the year

 Cyanotoxins detectable from November 2021 to June 2022



Technical Findings – Key Results: Nutrients and DO

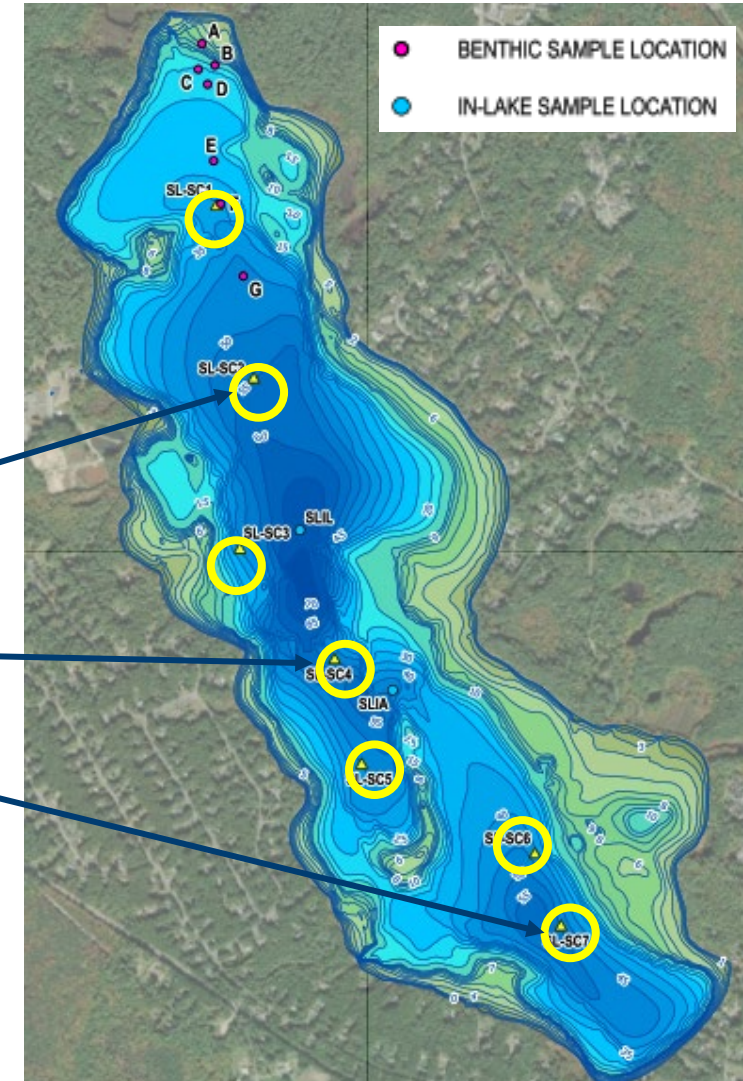
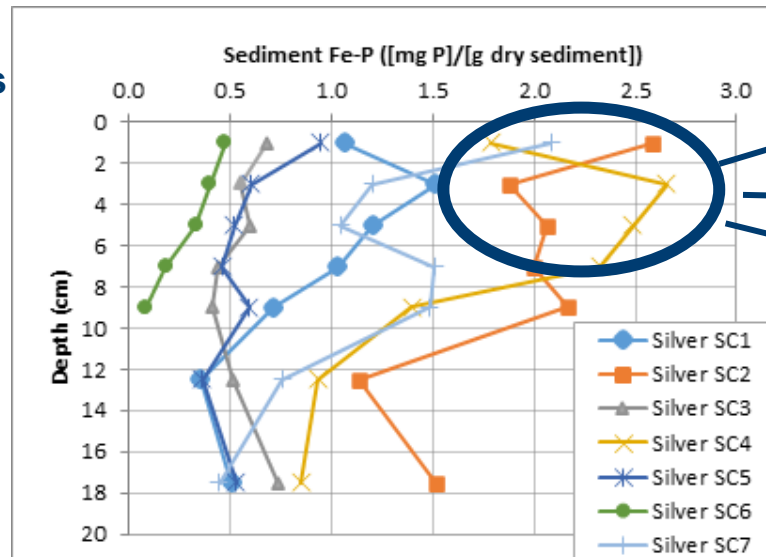
- Total phosphorus exceeds EPA’s “Gold Book” standard of 0.025 mg/L (25 ppb)
- This suggests Silver Lake is at a high risk for cyanobacteria bloom issues (MassDEP 2021 Guidance on Cyanobacteria and Public Water Systems)



Technical Findings – Key Results: Sediment Phosphorus

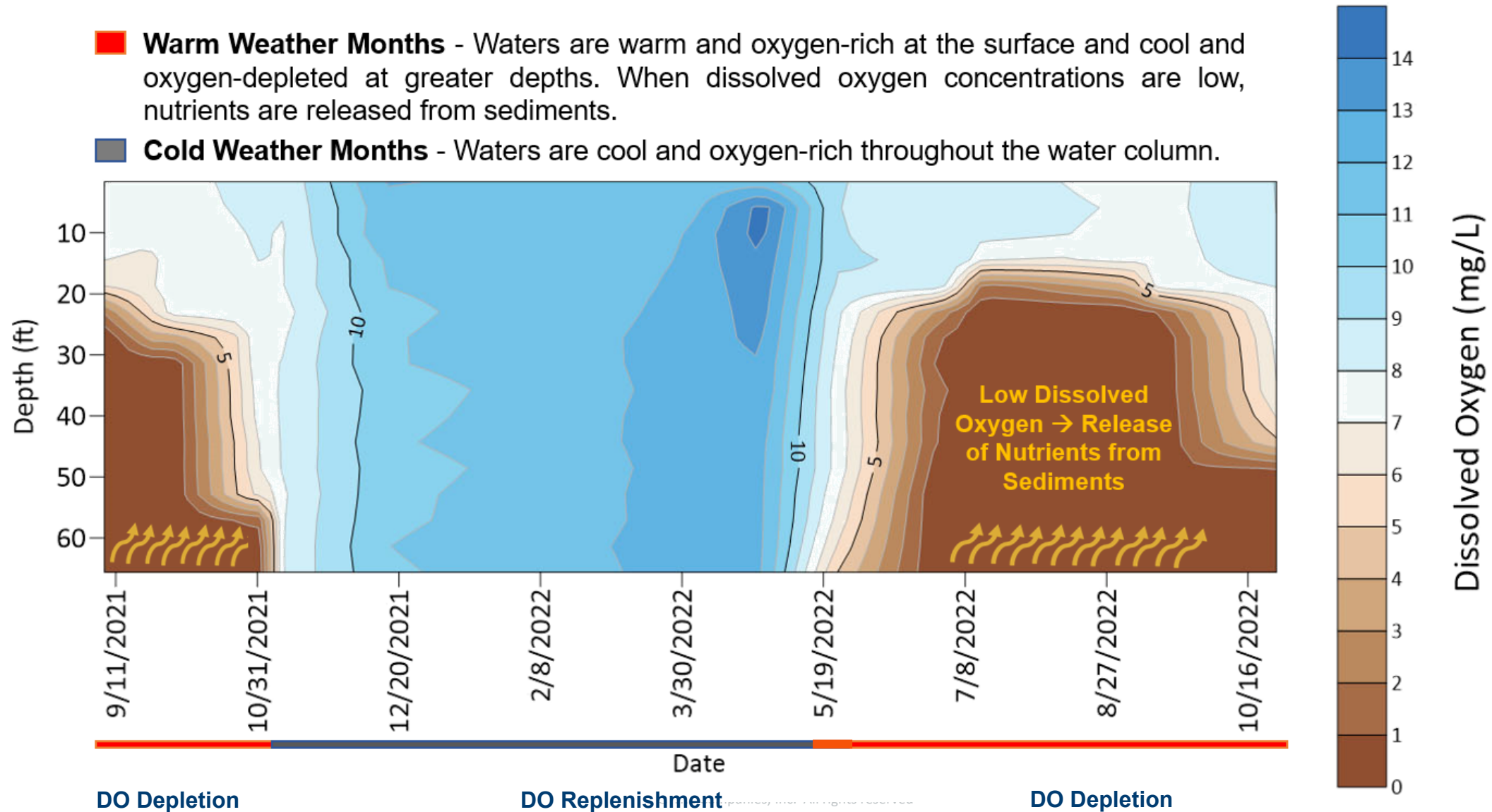
- Internal Loading: Sediment phosphorus can easily release into the water when bound to iron and exposed to low dissolved oxygen over a long time
- Iron-bound phosphorus is abundant in surface sediments of Silver Lake, especially in deeper waters

More Recent Sediments
 ↑
 ↓
 Older Sediments



Technical Findings – Key Results: Nutrients and DO

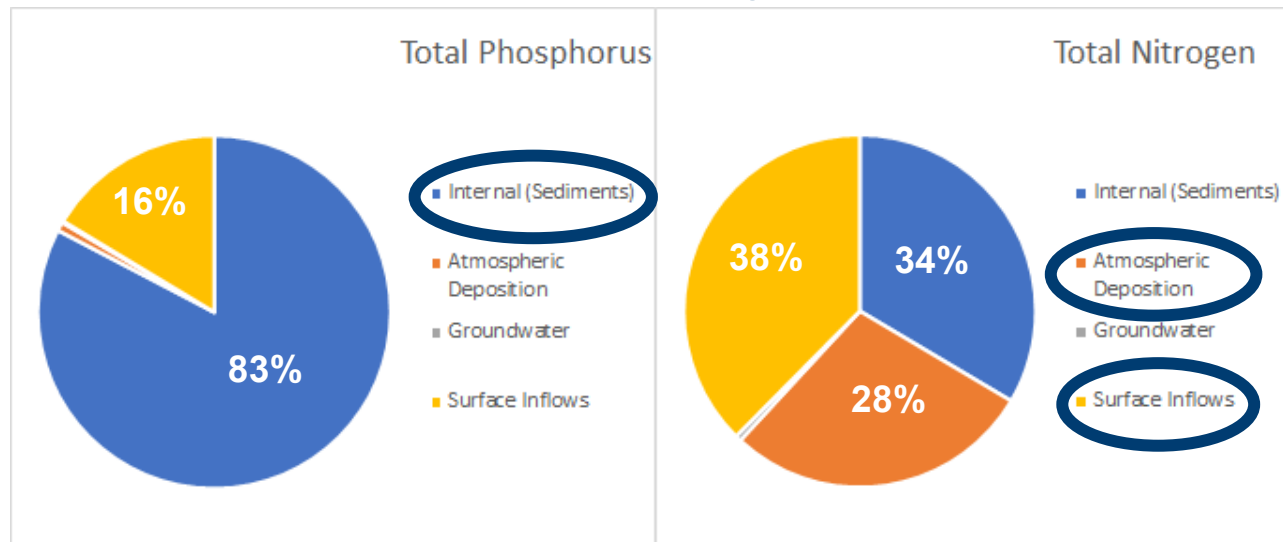
- **Warm Weather Months** - Waters are warm and oxygen-rich at the surface and cool and oxygen-depleted at greater depths. When dissolved oxygen concentrations are low, nutrients are released from sediments.
- **Cold Weather Months** - Waters are cool and oxygen-rich throughout the water column.



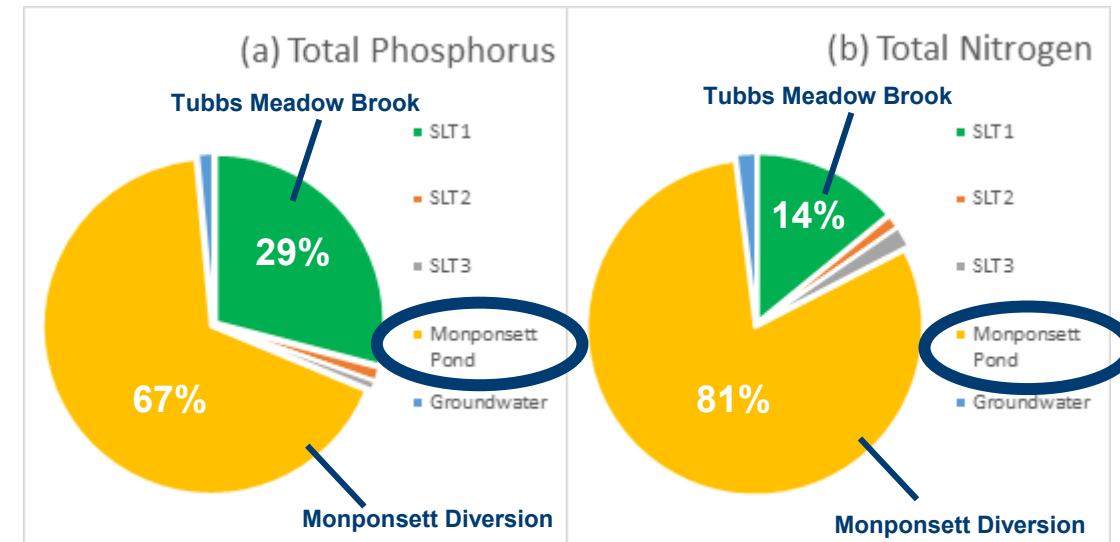
Technical Findings: Nutrient Loading to Silver Lake

- Internal loading from sediments was largest source of phosphorus to Silver Lake (>80%)
- External loading accounted for a larger share of nitrogen loading, mostly through surface inflows and atmospheric deposition
- Monponsett diversion was the largest source of external phosphorus (67%) and nitrogen (81%) loading

All Loading



Surface and Groundwater Loading Only



Conclusions and Recommendations for Next Steps

Silver Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program

In Conclusion – Overall Assessment of Silver Lake

Applying MassDEP's weight-of-evidence approach described in the Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology, results of 2021-2022 monitoring program suggest Silver Lake is:

- Not supportive of Aquatic Life
 - Non-native plants
 - Dissolved oxygen – already listed as impairment by MassDEP
 - Total phosphorus
- Supportive of Aesthetics
- Not supportive of Primary Contact Recreation (although swimming is prohibited)
 - Harmful algal blooms
- Supportive of Secondary Contact Recreation (also prohibited)

However, definitive water quality assessments for surface water use support are the responsibility of MassDEP's Watershed Planning Program. Data from this study were shared with MassDEP to support this process.



In Conclusion – Key Takeaways

- Silver Lake appears to be facing multiple management issues.
- These impact aquatic life and present a challenge to future use of Silver Lake as a public water supply.
- Excessive nutrients – particularly phosphorus – were associated with many of these issues.
- Internal loading from the sediments appeared to be the primary source of phosphorus to Silver Lake.
- Diversions from East Monponsett Pond were the primary external source of nutrients.

Recommendations for Next Steps

- Develop and implement an appropriate management response plan to address current water quality issues and mitigate future risks.
- Large-scale approach will be needed to fully address the observed issues on a broader basis.
 1. Ongoing monitoring is recommended to track water quality, water quantity, and ecological trends.
 2. Additional modeling could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative management scenarios.
 3. Ultimately, need to develop a comprehensive management plan for Silver Lake.
 4. Participate in Old Colony Planning Commission Regional “Economic Resilience and Sustainable Water Supply Study.”



What Do You Think? Feedback & Comments

Remember - To Provide Written Feedback:

Submit written comments to Frank Basler (fbasler@plymouthcountyma.gov)

by January 15, 2024 at 5PM via email