

Report to White Lake Town Board
August 2026
Diane Lauritsen, Ph.D. LIMNOSCIENCES

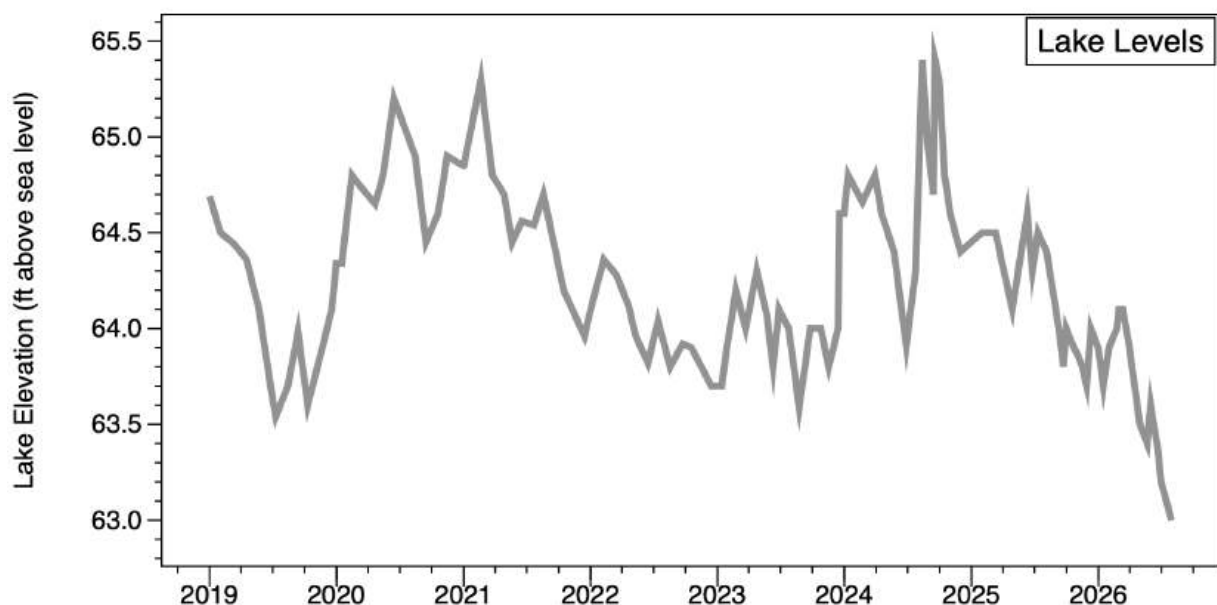
The White Lake Watch web site is an up-to-date resource for those with questions about the lake, and photos combined with information about lake level changes and rainfall amounts are being posted. While the decline in lake elevation this month was only 2.4 inches, it made a visible impact on the shoreline:



The lake level is now 13.2 inches below the “high” seen in February and March, and the deepest portions of the lake are around 6 feet. As a result, a lot of mud can be stirred up, even by smaller boats. Jeff Howell said that they had spent around \$20K to extend the boat ramp at the marina. The fishing tournaments have been called off because of the higher water temperatures (which they have been doing every summer, as it becomes hard to keep the bass alive), and he mentioned that several fishermen had caught (and released) bass over 11 pounds earlier in the year, while Thursday night tournament winners have been around 5.75 lbs.



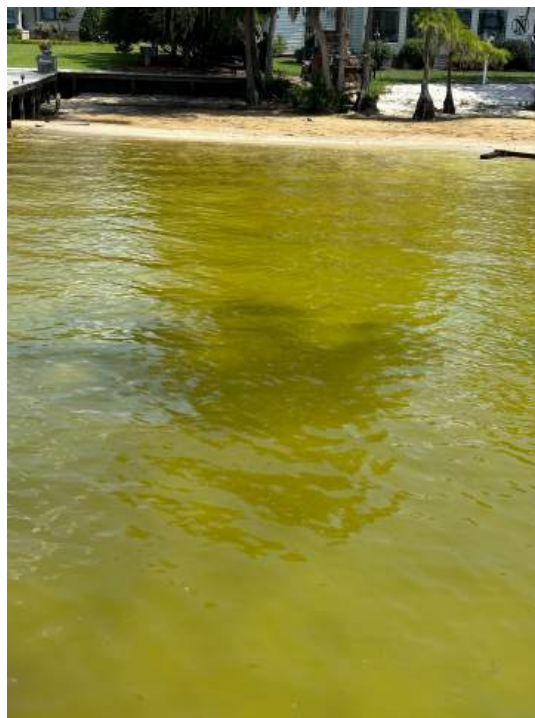
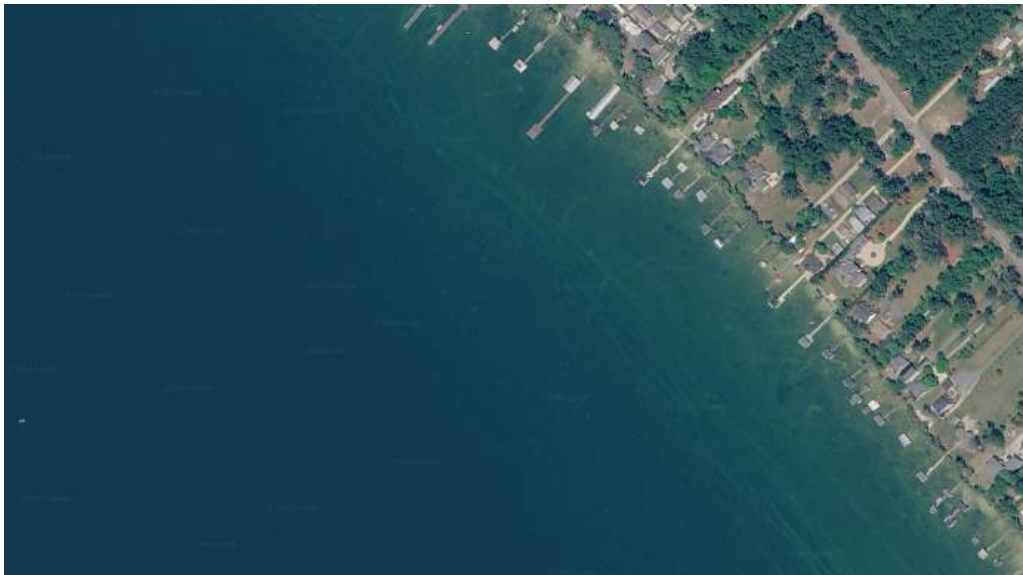
Left photo: the gauge at Turtle Cove reading 63 feet NAVD 88; right photo: PVC pipe at the marina marked with elevations, also reading 63 feet (Jeff set it in with a surveyor to get accurate measurements of elevation).





The parachutists were on target to drop into the middle region of the lake on Friday, July 31st.

Last month I shared this satellite imagery from Google Maps/Google Earth and was able to wade out to check out what the vegetation was that showed up along the eastern shoreline in April. It is a native aquatic plant called dwarf milfoil, and it is only a couple of inches tall, but can form dense clumps, with entwined roots that keep it anchored in the sand.



Dwarf Milfoil

Dwarf milfoil was the only aquatic plant I saw at White Lake on the 31st. Its presence and relative abundance have increased in recent years, while other things, like spikerush, have declined in abundance, probably due to the low water levels and increased turbidity near the lake bottom.

I visited Lake Waccamaw before coming to White Lake, and lake levels are exceedingly low there as well. In many places there is an abundance of floating filamentous algal mats, in addition to rooted vegetation:



Narrowleaf spatterdock with dense mats of filamentous green algae, northern shore of Lake Waccamaw, July 30, 2026



Freshwater mussels are clearly visible in the shallows of Lake Waccamaw, as well as clumps of filamentous algae. The water is only a few inches deep. July 30, 2026