

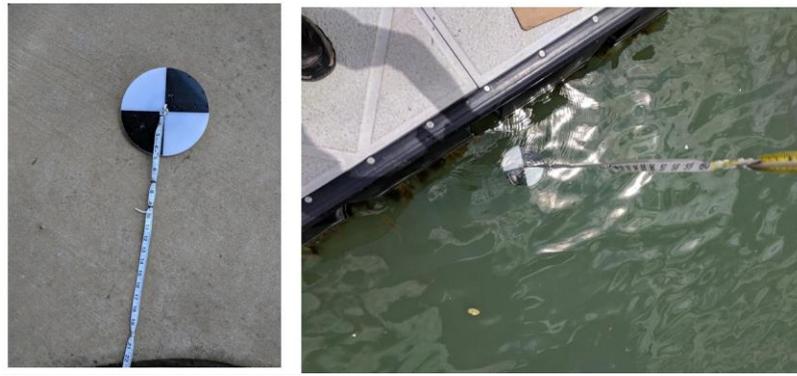
Tellico Reservoir Citizen Lake Monitoring Program

Tellico Reservoir has excellent water quality, but many streams flowing into the reservoir are listed as impaired for bacteria and high levels of nutrients. Though the pollutants are normally confined to the streams, a heavy rain event can cause that water (and contents) to flow into the reservoir. .

The clarity of water is an easily measured, yet useful indicator of lake health. Water clarity can be used to analyze trends in water quality, characterize the trophic status of a body of water, and provide a basis for setting goals for water quality. Light penetration could be blocked by suspended material, be it algae, or sediment, or both. Long-term monitoring can help detect signs of degradation.

An easy to use tool called a secchi disk can evaluate water clarity of lakes by measuring the depth of light penetration of water. Another easy to use tool, a turbidity tube, can be used to monitor clarity of the streams that flow into the reservoir.

Secchi Disk used to measure water clarity in lakes



The Water Quality Improvement Committee (WQIC) began a water clarity monitoring program on Tellico Reservoir in 2018. Highlights of that 2018 endeavor (which will appear in a new report) are:

- The average secchi disk visibilities for 2018 measured at the Yacht Club courtesy pier and at the Clear Creek boat ramp was 58 inches and 47 inches, respectively. (Note that the average annual secchi disk visibility measured by TVA at Mile 1 and Mile 15, for the years 1993-2017 was 79 inches and 81 inches, respectively).
- The September secchi disk visibility in three Tellico Reservoir embayments during 2018 averaged 21 inches less than that measured during WQIC projects in 2016.

WQIC needs volunteers for monitoring to get a more concise picture of the reservoir's water quality. To participate, use the "Contact Us" in the [About Us](#) link from the home page to contact the reservoir monitoring program.