

Focus on: PFAS

Sediment Trends — Summer 2026

What are we doing?

We collect sediment cores to study how chemicals have built up in the environment over time. Sediment cores will be collected from the following Washington lakes this summer:

- American Lake (Pierce County)
- Loon Lake (Stevens County)
- Lake Sammamish (King County)

We choose three new lakes each year to sample different parts of the state and target water bodies based on the chemicals we are measuring. In 2026, we are focusing on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also called PFAS.

PFAS include thousands of fluorinated, synthetic organic compounds with unique properties that make them useful as water, stain, and oil repellents, thermal and chemical stabilizers, and for reducing friction. They're used in many manufacturing and production processes and in consumer products.

PFAS can end up in lake sediments through stormwater runoff, air deposition, wastewater treatment effluent, leaking septic systems, accidental spills, and direct application of fire-fighting foams nearby. PFAS persist in the environment, and some compounds bioaccumulate in wildlife, concentrating at higher levels in the food chain. People are most often exposed to PFAS through contaminated drinking water and fish.

Why do we do this?

Sediment cores help us understand how the concentrations of chemicals in the environment have

changed over time. We age-date the cores to find the peak concentration for a set of chemicals and determine whether levels are increasing or decreasing. This is important because the chemicals we study are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic.

PFAS exposure is linked to negative health impacts in people such as endocrine system disruption, high cholesterol, reproductive and developmental issues, and some cancers. You can learn more from our [PFAS](#) webpage¹ and the Washington State Department of Health's [PFAS](#) webpage.²

To learn more about actions we are taking to address priority toxic chemicals, visit our [toxics reduction](#) webpage.³

Results are coming soon!

We expect our 2026 results to be available as an interactive StoryMap and in our [EIM database](#)⁴ by fall 2027. Reports for previous sampling years and other resources are available on our [Contaminants in Lake Sediment Cores](#) webpage.^{5, QR}



Contact information

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ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

Related Links:

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/pfas>

² <https://doh.wa.gov/pfas>

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/CAPs>

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/research-data/data-resources/environmental-information-management-database>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/sedcores>