



2023 Edition

The Water Bulletin

The Newsletter of the Community Science Institute

Enfield Creek at
Robert H. Treman State Park.
Photo by Nate Launer.

What Does it Mean to be a “Certified” Lab?

Community Science Institute (CSI) operates a “certified lab,” but what does that really mean? And why bother with lab certification? In this article, we’ll answer these two questions and give a brief history about the organization that certifies our lab. First, let’s consider the importance of data – by the end of this article, I hope to convey more specifically the importance of “data of known and documented quality.”¹

Most environmental compliance and clean-up decisions are made based on data. The quality of the data determines the effectiveness of these decisions, so regulatory agencies need to have a way to be certain that the data they use are of high quality. Laboratories may opt into an accreditation program to assure the overall reliability of their data, such that data can be used for regulatory purposes. In New York State (NYS), the enforcement of certain laws and regulations require that environmental testing be done by an accredited lab.² Such state water quality regulations implement federal requirements, namely those from the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Back in the 1970s, the CWA and SDWA granted the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to implement controls on the release of pollutants into public drinking water supplies and navigable waters.^{3,4} This set the stage for compliance monitoring and the need for testing.

Inside this Edition

What Does it Mean to be a “Certified” Lab? • page 1

HAB or HAB Not? Oscillatoria Clumps in the Cayuga Lake Watershed • page 6

Chloride in Cayuga Lake • page 8

HABs on Cayuga Lake: Takeaways from the 2023 Monitoring Season • page 12