



## Vocabulary

**Abiotic** – The non-living components of an ecosystem (ex. sunlight, physical and chemical characteristics).

**Animal** – A multicellular organism that can move, feed itself, digest its food, remove its waste, respond to its environment, and reproduce.

**AutoAnalyzer** – A device used to test the chemical properties of various substances.

**Biotic** – The living components of an ecosystem (ex. animals and plants).

**Carnivore** – A consumer that only eats other animals.

**Chlorophyll** – The main pigment of photosynthesis.

**Conductivity** – A measure of the ability of water to pass an electrical charge.

**Consumer** – An organism that eats or consumes other organisms to survive.

**Ecosystem** – A community of organisms and the non-living environment they inhabit.

**Euphotic Zone** – The water layer with sufficient light for photosynthesis.

**Food Chain** – A series of organisms linked together by the transfer of food energy from one population of organisms to another population of organisms.

**Food Web** – A series of interlocking and independent food chains found in an ecosystem.

**Herbivore** – A consumer that only eats photosynthetic plants and/or algae.

**HydroLab®** – A device with multiple sensors that measures many water quality properties.

**Nutrients** – Elements or chemicals required to sustain life, including carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, and phosphorus.

**Omnivore** – A consumer that eats both plants/algae and animals.

**Organism** – A living creature (ex. plants, animals, bacteria).

**Pathogen** – An organism (bacteria, virus, etc.) that can cause disease.

**Plankton** – Microscopic organisms that float or drift in oceans and freshwater.

**Phytoplankton** – A single-celled organism (often called algae) that photosynthesizes and drifts with the currents in lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands.

**Plant** – An organism that produces its own food to survive.

**Producer** – An organism that can use light or chemical energy to produce its own food from inorganic (non-living) substances (ex. plant, algae, or cyanobacteria) typically via photosynthesis.

**Secchi Disk** – A black and white or all white 20 cm disk attached to a cord used to measure water transparency.

**Septic System** – An individual wastewater treatment system that includes a septic tank for removing solids, and a leach field for discharging the clarified wastewater to the ground.

**Spectrometer** – A measuring device that collects light waves to determine the material that emitted the energy.

**Thermal Stratification** – The process by which a lake or pond forms several distinct thermal layers.

**Thermocline** – The region of the greatest vertical temperature change in a stratified water body.

**Tributary** – A stream or river that flows into a larger river or lake.

**Turbidity** – A measure of the light scattering properties of water; describes water clarity or the presence or absence of suspended materials in water.





### Vocabulary

**Water Transparency** – The amount of light that penetrates into a lake or stream.

**Zooplankton** – A microscopic animal that drifts with the water that consumes phytoplankton or bacteria to survive.

