



Why Filter Lake Water?

Water samples collected from Flathead Lake may appear relatively clear and free of particles, so why pass it through filters? Filters are an important way for scientists to remove particles like sediment or **plankton** from a sample. Particles can clog and damage scientific equipment as well as give false readings when running tests. Therefore, water samples are filtered before being passed through testing equipment. The filtered water is then used to run tests. Lake ecologists are also interested in what is left on the filter so they run tests with these filters. For example, filters often trap the smallest phytoplankton which can't be seen with a microscope but can be identified in other ways.

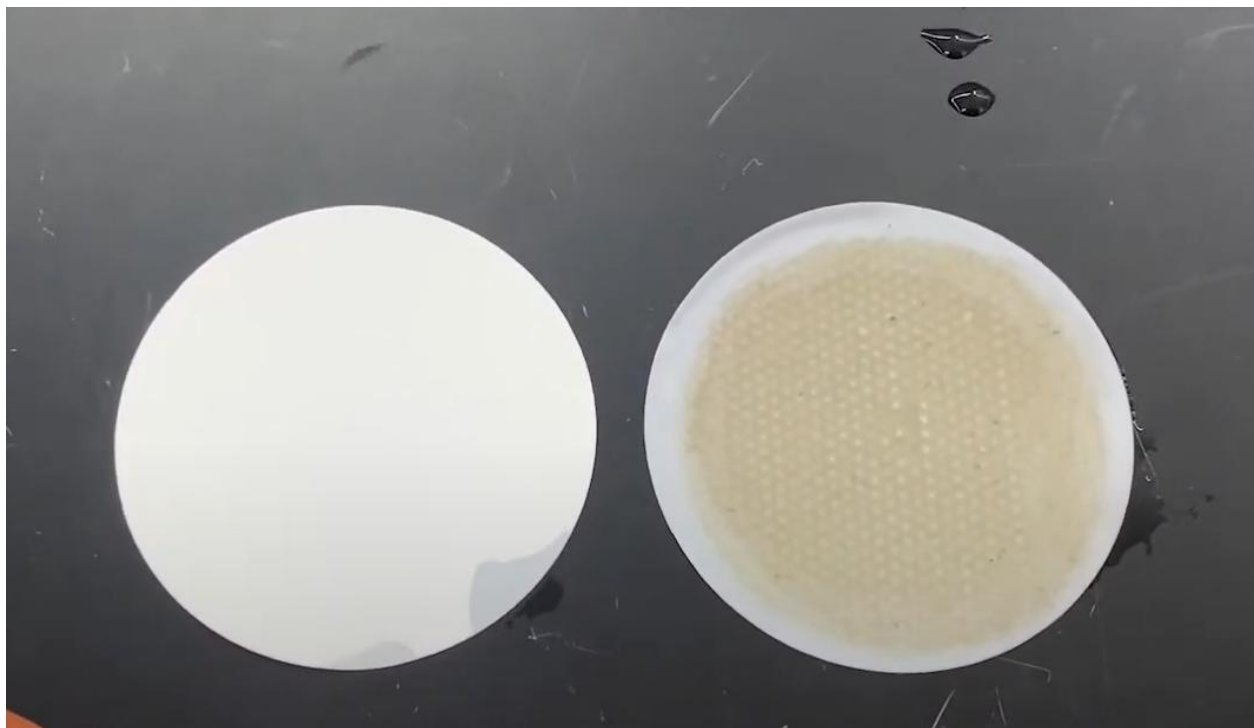


Photo: An unused and used filter at the Freshwater Research Lab. PC: Flathead Lake Biological Station

Follow along with the Make Your Own Filter activity. Learn about how filtering plays an important part in keeping Flathead Lake clean by reading Septic Systems and Flathead Lake.

*The definitions of the bold words can be found in the Virtual Research Cruise Vocabulary document.

