

Michigan Lakes PFAS Foam Reporting Request

Western Michigan University, in partnership with the Michigan Geological Survey, is starting a study on the naturally formed foams on lakes. As property owners, we are asking for your help to identify, and report foams we can sample and analyze so we can better understand foams and which chemicals they contain.

What are PFAS?

You may have heard of PFAS, often called “forever chemicals”. The term “PFAS” represents a large family of thousands of individual chemicals. They are in many everyday products, from non-stick pans to stain-resistant carpets. Because they’ve been used for so long, they’re now found everywhere—in our water, soil, and even in the air.

While we’ve learned a lot about PFAS, we still need to learn more about how and which PFAS compounds impact the foam that forms on lakes.

Why are we studying lake foam?

You may have seen bright white foam on your lake’s surface or collected along the shoreline. This foam can contain high concentrations of PFAS. For our study, we want to collect samples of this foam to:

Identify the individual PFAS chemicals that cause the foam.

Measure how much of each PFAS compound is in the foam.

Better understand the conditions that promote the formation of foam.

This research will help us predict when and where this foam might appear and what’s in it. This information is important for you, the property owner, as foams of any kind have always been a concern. Our goal is for this study to be the first step toward understanding PFAS in foams and developing methods to manage this issue.

How you can help

We need your eyes on the lake! By reporting when and where you see foam, you’ll help us select the best locations for our research. We’re asking Michigan Lakes and Streams members to let us know about any foam sightings by using the form below. *Samples will be collected until October 1, 2026.*

Please note: While all of our study results will be kept anonymous (we will not share lake names or specific locations), we can provide the test results for your individual lake to you upon request. We believe it’s important to keep you informed.

You can find the form here: <https://arcg.is/1uqe090>