

Paleolimnological analysis of Nulki Lake, B.C -- Final Report  
(March 2000)

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Nulki Lake.

BACKGROUND

Nulki Lake was cored on October 6, 1999 by Rick Nordin and  
Bruce Carmichael. The core was retrieved using a modified K-B  
corer (internal diameter ~ 6.35 cm) from the deep basin. On shore  
the core was sectioned into 0.5-cm intervals into 120-ml plastic  
containers. Every other sample was shipped on ice to Queen's  
University where they were stored in our coldroom at 4°C. The  
containers were weighed to determine the total wet weight of  
sediment prior to subsampling for  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  analyses. Twenty  
intervals (every 2 cm) were subsampled for diatom and sixteen  
intervals for  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  analysis. Prepared samples for  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  analysis  
(see below) were sent to MYCORE Ltd.

METHODS

$^{210}\text{Pb}$  Dating and Percent Organic Matter

The wet weight of the sediment was determined for all the  
subsections of the core that were shipped to Queen's. Sixteen  
subsamples of wet sediment from each core were weighed and oven-  
dried (24 hr at 105°C) and reweighed to determine percent water  
and dry weight of the sediment. Samples that were submitted for  
 $^{210}\text{Pb}$  analysis were ground to a fine dust by use of a pestle and  
redried overnight at 105°C. The weight of this dried sediment

was recorded to four decimal places after it was put in a tared plastic digestion tube for determination of  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  activity that was shipped to MYCORE Ltd.

Percent organic matter for each of the 16  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  samples was determined using standard loss-on-ignition methods (Dean, 1974). A known quantity of dried sediment (recorded to four decimal places) was heated to  $550^\circ\text{C}$  for 2 hours. The difference between the dry weight of the sediment and the weight of sediment remaining after ignition was used to estimate the percent of organic matter in each sediment sample.

$^{210}\text{Pb}$  activities were estimated from determination of 209-Po and a tracer of known activity by alpha spectroscopy. Unsupported  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  is calculated by subtracting supported  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  (the baseline activity determined from bottom samples of the core) from the total activity at each level. The sediment chronology and sedimentation rates were calculated using the constant rate of supply (CRS) model (Appleby and Oldfield, 1978) from the estimates of  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  activities and estimates of cumulative dry mass (Binford, 1990). See Appendix B for summaries of  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  analyses by MYCORE (B-1), summary of  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  calculations (B-1,2), and output from the CRS model (B-3).

#### Diatom Preparation and Enumeration

Slides for diatom analysis were prepared using standard techniques (Cumming, Wilson, Smol and Hall, 1995). Briefly, a small amount of wet sediment was suspended in a 50:50 (molar) mixture of sulfuric and nitric acid in a 20-ml glass vial for 24 hr. prior to being submersed at  $70^\circ\text{C}$  in a hot water bath for 5 hr. The remaining sediment material was settled for a period of 24 hr, at which time the acid above the sample was removed. The sample was rinsed with distilled water and allowed to settle once again for 24 hrs. The procedure was repeated approx. 10 times until the sample was acid free (litmus test). The samples were settled onto coverslips in a series of four 100% dilutions, which when dry, were mounted onto glass slides using a high-resolution mounting media called Naphrax<sup>®</sup>. For each sample, at least 400 diatom taxa were enumerated with a Leica DMRB microscope equipped with DIC optics at 1000X magnification (Numerical Aperature of objective = 1.3). These analyses were based on the references of Krammer and Lange-Bertalot (1986, 1988, 1991a,b), Patrick and Reimer (1966, 1975) and Cumming et al. (1995).

#### Cluster Analysis

A depth-constrained cluster analysis was run on the diatom assemblages in the core to provide an unbiased assessment of changes in diatom assemblages through time. A squared chord distance as the similarity measure between samples in the cluster analysis. Zones based on this clustering algorithm were placed

on the diatom stratigraphy to represent zones of similar diatom assemblages (dashed lines on Fig. 2).

#### Diatom-based Reconstructions of Total Phosphorus

Inferences of total phosphorus from the diatom assemblages in the core are based on a phosphorus model developed from 111 freshwater lakes from the 219 lakes sampled by Wilson, Cumming & Smol (1996). This model is based on estimates of the optima of taxa from weighted-averaging regression on non-transformed relative percentage data. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) of this model is 0.66, and the jackknifed  $r^2$  is 0.47. This model is superior to the earlier models developed by Reavie, Hall & Smol (1995) for several reasons including its better predictive ability and the larger number of samples which provide more analogs for downcore reconstructions.

The total phosphorus inferences (Fig. 1E) were critically assessed to determine: 1) if they tracked the main direction of variation in the diatom species assemblages (Fig. 1D); and 2) to assess if the assemblages encountered in the core are well represented in the modern-day samples (Fig. 1F). If the diatom-based phosphorus reconstruction matches the main direction of variation in the diatom assemblages downcore, then we can be fairly confident that the diatoms are tracking changes that are mainly related to phosphorus. If the correlation between the main direction of variation and the diatom-inferred phosphorus values is weak or nonexistent, then other environmental variables (e.g. pH, conductivity, turbulence, etc), or interactions between environmental variables, are likely responsible for the observed changes in diatom assemblages.

#### Determination of the Main Direction of Variation

The main direction of variation in the diatom assemblages downcore was determined from the first axis scores from a principal components analysis (PCA) ordination using non-transformed species abundance data. A PCA was chosen to represent the main direction of variation of the diatom assemblages in this core based on the small gradient length ( $< 1.5$  sd units) obtained in an initial detrended correspondence analysis (DCA) ordination.

#### Analog Analysis of Diatom Assemblages

The reliability of the downcore total phosphorus inferences assumes that the diatom assemblages encountered downcore are well represented in our modern diatom assemblages. To determine if appropriate analogs existed for the core samples, we determined which samples in our present-day dataset of 111 lakes most resembled each of the downcore samples. This determination was based on a squared chord dissimilarity coefficient between all species found in each of the core samples. The best match

between downcore and modern samples was compared with the distribution of best match between modern samples. Any downcore sample that was more dissimilar than 80% of the modern distribution were deemed to be a 'poor analog'. Similarly, any downcore sample that was more dissimilar than 95% of the modern distribution were deemed to have 'no analog' in our present-day dataset. If the downcore assemblages have good representation in modern samples, more confidence can be placed in the reconstruction. If modern analogs do not exist or are poor, then caution must be placed in reconstructions from these downcore samples.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### <sup>210</sup>Pb Profile, Sedimentation Rates and Organic Matter

The <sup>210</sup>Pb profile from Nulki Lake shows an exponential decay with core depth (Fig. 1A). However, in the absence of any sediment disturbance and/or change in sedimentation rate through time, we would expect a stronger exponential decay of <sup>210</sup>Pb with depth. Results from the CRS model suggest that sedimentation rates increased in the early 1900s, followed by a larger increase since c. 1950 (Fig. 1B). The inferred increase in sedimentation rates is temporally consistent with the increase in percent organic matter, c. 1950 (Fig. 1C). The pronounced changes in organic matter (Fig. 1C) in conjunction with pronounced changes in diatom assemblages to a more eutrophic assemblage, suggest that the weakly exponential decay in <sup>210</sup>Pb activities with depth is consistent an increase in sedimentation rates in this lake. However, increases in sedimentation rates are best evaluated using multiple cores to avoid erroneous interpretations. The increase in organic matter c. 1950 is a unique change when viewed in the context of the last 300 years of sediment accumulation in this lake (Fig. 1C). Increases in organic matter can be attributed to several factors including increased in-lake production of organic matter, increased inwash of organic matter, or decreases in the load of inorganic matter of the lake.

### Diatom Assemblage Changes and Analyses

Approximately 100 diatom taxa were encounter in the sediment core from Nulki Lake (Appendix C-1). Changes in the diatom assemblages indicate that this lake has become increasing nutrient rich since c. 1950, with the greatest changes in trophic status occurring since the early 1980s (Figs. 2, 1E). Cluster analysis suggests the changes in diatom assemblages through time can be divided into three primary zones (Fig. 2).

Prior to c. 1950 (Fig. 2, Zone C), the diatom assemblage is dominated by taxa with TP optima in the range of 10-15 µg/L, although taxa indicative of a higher trophic status are present

(e.g. *Stephanodiscus minutulus*). Circa 1950, there is a marked increase in the abundance of the mesoeutrophic *Aulacoseira ambigua* (Fig. 2, Zone B), as well as increases in other eutrophic taxa including *Stephandiscus hantzschii*. These changes suggest that the lake began to become more nutrient rich at this time (Fig. 1E). In the early 1980s, further increases in *S. hantzschii* and *S. parvus* and declines in the relative abundance of *F. pinnata* suggest that this lake has become increasingly eutrophic (Fig. 2, Zone A; Fig. 1E). These results are consistent with the increases in organic matter and sedimentation rates discussed above.

PCA axis 1 scores (Fig. 1D) accounts for 78% of the variation in diatom taxa in this core. The coefficient of determination between the PCA axis 1 scores (Fig. 1D) and the log TP inferences (Fig. 1E) is 0.84. Thus, the inferred changes in TP are related to the main direction of variation in the diatom assemblages. Furthermore, the diatom assemblages in the core appear to be adequately represented in the modern day samples (Fig. 1F). Based on the above, we feel confident in reliability of the TP inferences provided from the diatom assemblages. In summary, all lines of evidence examined in this report, suggest that this lake has become increasingly nutrient rich since c. 1950, with the greatest changes occurring since the early 1980s.

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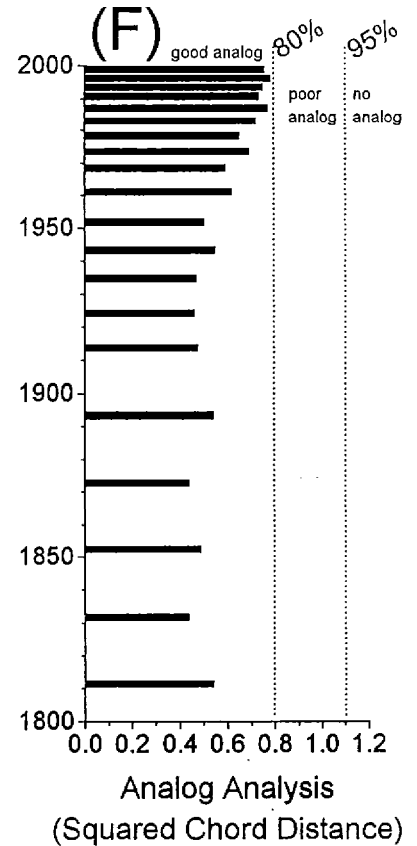
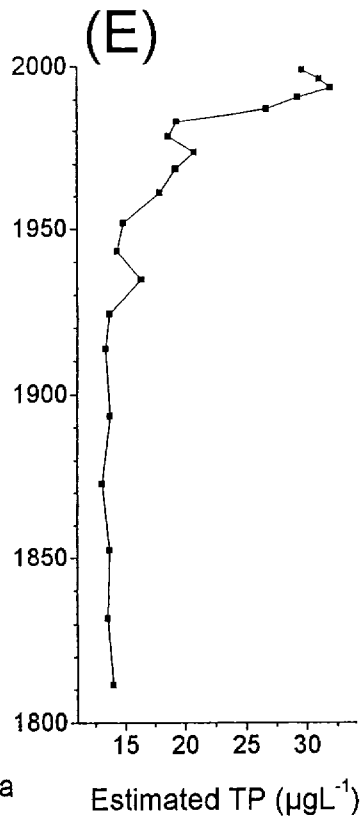
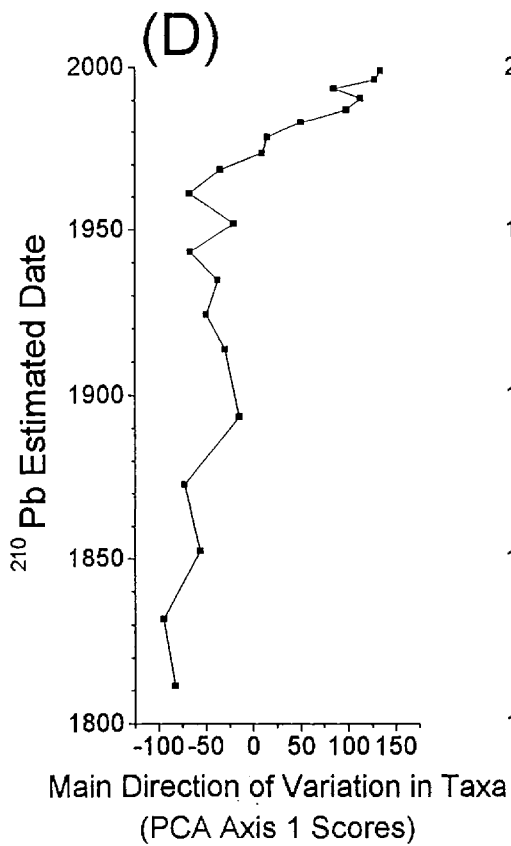
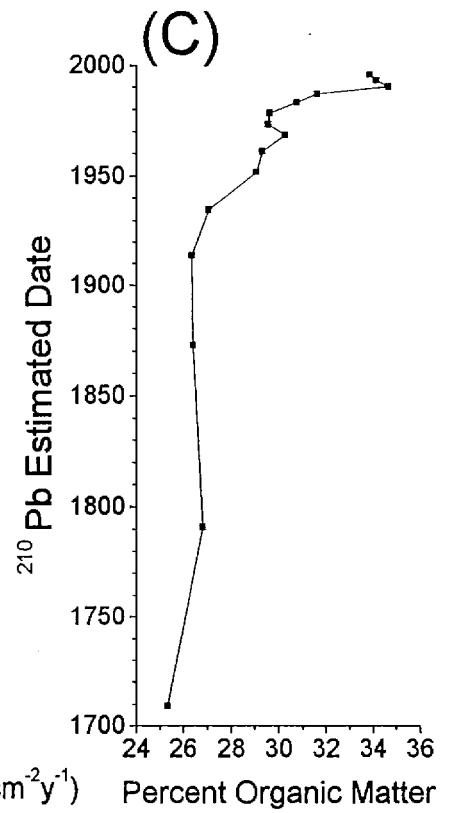
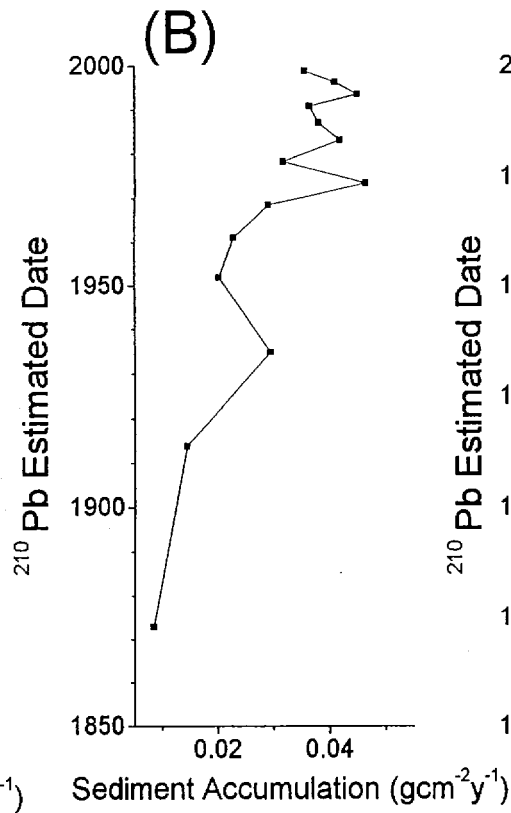
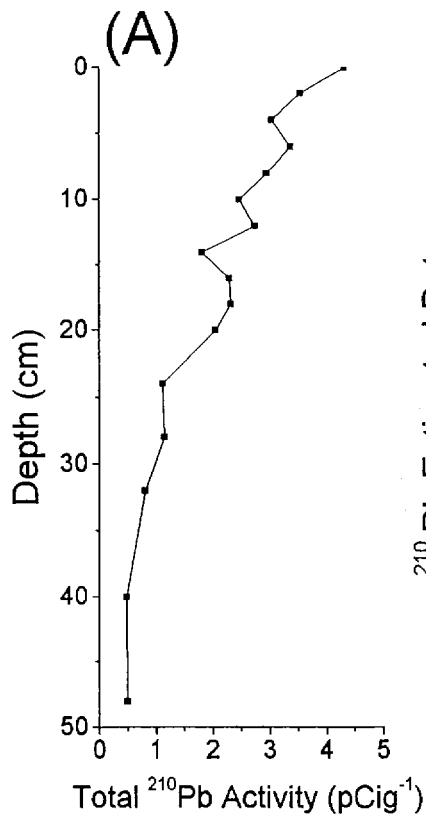
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## Figure Captions

Figure 1. Summary diagram for the sediment core from Nulki Lake showing: A) total  $^{210}\text{Pb}$  activity from which the chronology of the core is based; B) the sediment accumulation rate; C) the change in the percent of organic matter in the core; D) the main direction of variation in the diatom assemblage data; E) diatom-based estimated late-summer total phosphorus; and F) analog analysis showing the dissimilarity between present-day and downcore samples (any sample that has a squared chord distance  $> 0.8$  was determined to be a poor analog, whereas any sample with a squared chord distance greater than 1.1 was determined to have no analog in the modern dataset).

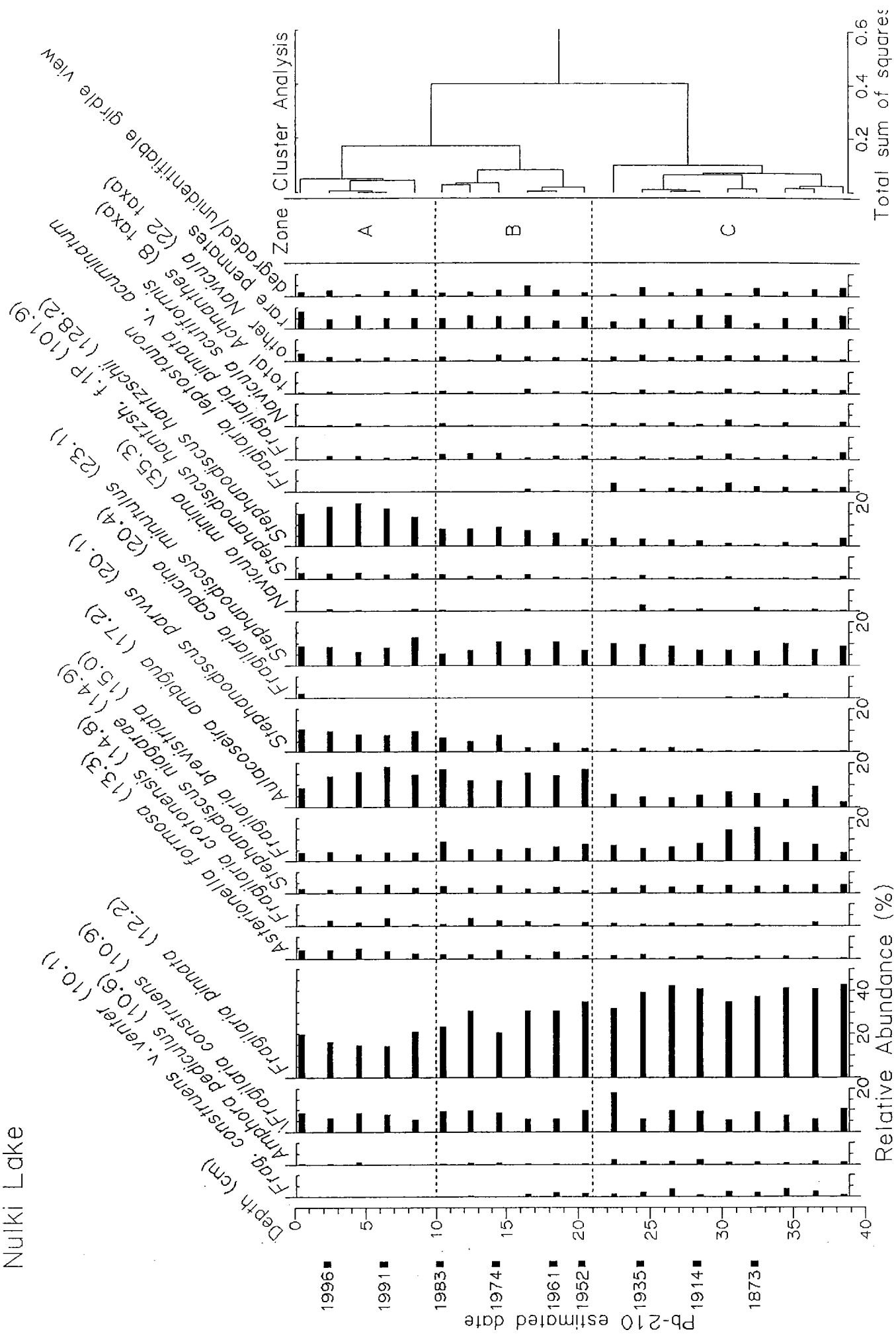
Figure 2. Stratigraphy of the most abundant diatom taxa found in the sediment core from Nulki Lake, B.C. (see Appendix C for a complete list of taxa and the relative percentage data). The diatom taxa are arranged in order of increasing late-summer total phosphorus (TP) optima which is indicated in parentheses for those taxa with known optima. The dotted lines separate the stratigraphy into the zones that were identified by a cluster analysis on the diatom assemblage composition that was constrained to the depth of the core samples (see text for details).

# Nulki Lake





Nulki Lake



Nulki Lake Summary File

Pb210 and LOI summary

INTTOP (cm)	INTBOT (cm)	Pb210Act (pCi/g)	LOI(550C) %organic	estimated AD date	SEDRATE (g/cm2/yr)
0	1	4.3103		1999.0	0.0353
2	2.5	3.5334	33.87	1996.4	0.0408
4	4.5	3.0365	34.15	1993.7	0.0448
6	6.5	3.3675	34.65	1990.8	0.0362
8	8.5	2.9436	31.61	1987.2	0.0380
10	10.5	2.4651	30.76	1983.2	0.0417
12	12.5	2.7352	29.63	1978.5	0.0316
14	14.5	1.8068	29.55	1973.6	0.0462
16	16.5	2.2925	30.27	1968.6	0.0290
18	18.5	2.3138	29.32	1961.2	0.0227
20	20.5	2.0405	29.06	1952.0	0.0201
24	24.5	1.1093	27.06	1934.9	0.0294
28	28.5	1.1457	26.36	1913.9	0.0144
32	32.5	0.8047	26.40	1873.0	0.0084
40	40.5	0.4783	26.80	1791.2	
48	48.5	0.4914	25.30	1709.4	

Diatom analyses

Depth (cm) TOP	Depth (cm) BOTTOM	estimated AD date	log TP	TP	PCA Axis 1	minimum sq. chord
0	0.5	1999.0	1.471	29.58	134	0.7556
2	2.5	1996.4	1.491	30.97	128	0.782
4	4.5	1993.7	1.503	31.84	85	0.7495
6	6.5	1990.8	1.465	29.17	113	0.732
8	8.5	1987.2	1.425	26.61	98	0.7688
10	10.5	1983.2	1.285	19.28	50	0.717
12	12.5	1978.5	1.269	18.58	15	0.6494
14	14.5	1973.6	1.316	20.70	9	0.6895
16	16.5	1968.6	1.282	19.14	-35	0.5919
18	18.5	1961.2	1.251	17.82	-68	0.6186
20	20.5	1952.0	1.17	14.79	-21	0.5014
22	22.5	1943.4	1.155	14.29	-67	0.5469
24	24.5	1934.9	1.213	16.33	-38	0.4701
26	26.5	1924.4	1.135	13.65	-50	0.4619
28	28.5	1913.9	1.126	13.37	-30	0.4752
30	30.5	1893.4	1.138	13.74	-15	0.539
32	32.5	1873.0	1.115	13.03	-73	0.4401
34	34.5	1852.5	1.135	13.65	-56	0.4889
36	36.5	1832.1	1.131	13.52	-95	0.4366
38	38.5	1811.6	1.145	13.96	-83	0.5404

Sample Number	Disk #	Section of Core		Sample Weight used (mg)	209 Po Counts	210 Po Counts	210 Po Meas (Bq/g)	210 Po (Bq/g)	Precision 1 STD (%)	Back calculate to coring (KRL)										Decay Corr. to Extractn (Bq/g)	Decay Corr. to Std dev (Bq/g)	
		Top (cm)	Bottom (cm)							Section of Core Top (cm)	Section of Core Bottom (cm)	Date Po Sample	Extra	Date of coring	Time since coring (days)							
Nuliki Lake										Nuliki L.												
65	591	0	1	447	4271	347	0.144	0.158	5.6	0	1	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.1583	0.1595	0.0057
66	592	2	3	525	6963	516	0.118	0.130	4.6	2	3	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.1298	0.1307	0.0042
67	593	4	5	507	14370	918	0.101	0.112	3.4	4	5	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.1115	0.1124	0.0026
68	594	6	7	523	11269	1127	0.112	0.124	3.1	6	7	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.1237	0.1246	0.0027
69	595	8	9	617	18139	1455	0.098	0.108	2.7	8	9	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.1081	0.1089	0.0022
70	596	10	11	510	5808	319	0.081	0.091	5.8	10	11	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0905	0.0912	0.0036
71	597	12	13	570	12894	910	0.090	0.100	3.4	12	13	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.1005	0.1012	0.0025
72	598	14	15	770	17747	1085	0.060	0.066	3.1	14	15	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0664	0.0669	0.0018
73	599	16	17	717	11826	860	0.075	0.084	3.5	16	17	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0842	0.0848	0.0024
74	600	18	19	559	12143	899	0.076	0.085	3.9	18	19	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0850	0.0856	0.0024
75	601	20	20.5	602	12991	706	0.067	0.075	3.9	20	20.5	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0749	0.0755	0.0022
76	602	24	25	663	5311	174	0.036	0.041	7.7	24	25	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0407	0.0410	0.0022
77	603	28	29	577	6248	184	0.037	0.042	7.5	28	29	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0421	0.0424	0.0024
78	604	32	33	593	6262	130	0.026	0.030	8.9	32	33	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0296	0.0298	0.0020
79	605	40	41	768	13623	222	0.015	0.018	6.8	40	41	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0176	0.0177	0.0010
80	606	48	49	762	7032	118	0.016	0.018	9.3	48	49	100	1	1	1	99	10	6	87	0.0180	0.0182	0.0015

CALCULATIONS FOR INPUT INTO BINFORD PROGRAM

BINFORD FILE INPUTS FOR CALCULATIONS OF DATES AND SEDIMENTATION RATES

Nulki - Pb210

Nulki  
C1  
16.00  
0.0093

INTTOP (cm)	INTBOT (cm)	Pb-210		Pb210		Rho (g cm-3)	OM proportion	CUMTOP (g cm-2)	CUMBOT (g cm-2)	std (pCi-g-1)
		activity (Bq/g)	Std dev (Bq/g)	activity (pCi-g-1)	Std dev (pCi-g-1)					
0	1	0.1595	0.0057	4.3103	0.1547	0.0573	0.342	0.0000	0.0573	0.1547
2	2.5	0.1307	0.0042	3.5334	0.1127	0.0558	0.339	0.1114	0.1393	0.1127
4	4.5	0.1124	0.0026	3.0365	0.0714	0.0591	0.341	0.2240	0.2536	0.0714
6	6.5	0.1246	0.0027	3.3675	0.0725	0.0574	0.347	0.3457	0.3744	0.0725
8	8.5	0.1089	0.0022	2.9436	0.0606	0.0769	0.316	0.4843	0.5228	0.0606
10	10.5	0.0912	0.0036	2.4651	0.0986	0.0799	0.308	0.6328	0.6728	0.0986
12	12.5	0.1012	0.0025	2.7352	0.0685	0.0930	0.296	0.7959	0.8423	0.0685
14	14.5	0.0669	0.0018	1.8068	0.0481	0.0908	0.296	0.9811	1.0265	0.0481
16	16.5	0.0848	0.0024	2.2925	0.0662	0.0903	0.303	1.1607	1.2059	0.0662
18	18.5	0.0856	0.0024	2.3138	0.0654	0.1006	0.293	1.3422	1.3925	0.0654
20	20.5	0.0755	0.0022	2.0405	0.0596	0.0958	0.291	1.5311	1.5790	0.0596
24	24.5	0.0410	0.0025	1.1093	0.0685	0.1075	0.271	1.9187	1.9725	0.0685
28	28.5	0.0424	0.0024	1.1457	0.0642	0.1125	0.264	2.3897	2.4460	0.0642
32	32.5	0.0298	0.0020	0.8047	0.0543	0.1219	0.264	2.8216	2.8826	0.0543
40	40.5	0.0177	0.0010	0.4783	0.0281	0.1190	0.268	3.7160	3.7755	0.0281
48	48.5	0.0182	0.0015	0.4914	0.0395	0.1273	0.253	4.7066	4.7702	0.0395

avg 0.4848 =supported  
std 0.0093 0.5034

Back calculated to coring

pb210.bat

C:\PB210>pb210

C:\PB210>ECHO OFF

HIT CTRL-PR TSC, THEN RETURN FOR HARD COPY OUTPUT

HIT RETURN FOR SCREEN OUTPUT

Press any key to continue . . .

YOU ARE ANALYZING CORE C1

FROM LAKE Nulki

THE DATA ARE:

INTTOP	INTBOT	PB210ACT	UNSUPACT	RHO	PERCORG	CUMMASST	CUMMASSB	SDACT
0.0	1.0	4.31030	3.82550	0.05730	0.340	0.0000	0.0573	0.1547
2.0	2.5	3.53340	3.04850	0.05580	0.330	0.1114	0.1393	0.1127
4.0	4.5	3.03650	2.55170	0.05910	0.340	0.2240	0.2536	0.0714
6.0	6.5	3.36750	2.88270	0.05740	0.340	0.3457	0.3744	0.0725
8.0	8.5	2.94360	2.45880	0.07690	0.310	0.4843	0.5228	0.0606
10.0	10.5	2.46510	1.98020	0.07990	0.300	0.6328	0.6728	0.0986
12.0	12.5	2.73520	2.25040	0.09300	0.290	0.7959	0.8423	0.0685
14.0	14.5	1.80680	1.32200	0.09080	0.290	0.9811	1.0265	0.0481
16.0	16.5	2.29250	1.80770	0.09030	0.300	1.1607	1.2059	0.0662
18.0	18.5	2.31380	1.82900	0.10060	0.290	1.3422	1.3925	0.0654
20.0	20.5	2.04050	1.55570	0.09580	0.290	1.5311	1.5790	0.0596
24.0	24.5	1.10930	0.62450	0.10750	0.270	1.9187	1.9725	0.0685
28.0	28.5	1.14570	0.66090	0.11250	0.260	2.3897	2.4460	0.0642
32.0	32.5	0.80470	0.31990	0.12190	0.260	2.8216	2.8826	0.0543
40.0	40.5	0.47830	0.00000	0.11900	0.260	3.7160	3.7755	0.0281
48.0	48.5	0.49140	0.00000	0.12730	0.250	4.7066	4.7702	0.0395

STANDARD DEVIATION OF SUPPORTED PB-210 = 0.0093

Pb-210 dates for Lake Nulki

core C1

INTTOP	INTBOT	MIDINT	TTOP	SDTTOP	TBOT	SDTBOT	SEDRATE	SDSEDRT	SUMTOP
0.0	1.0	0.5	0.00	0.28	1.62	0.28	0.0353	0.0068	4.4447
2.0	2.5	2.2	3.13	0.28	3.81	0.28	0.0408	0.0069	4.0319
4.0	4.5	4.2	5.83	0.29	6.49	0.30	0.0448	0.0064	3.7065
6.0	6.5	6.2	8.66	0.31	9.45	0.31	0.0362	0.0055	3.3940
8.0	8.5	8.2	12.14	0.33	13.15	0.33	0.0380	0.0056	3.0458
10.0	10.5	10.2	16.11	0.35	17.07	0.35	0.0417	0.0082	2.6915
12.0	12.5	12.2	20.62	0.38	22.09	0.39	0.0316	0.0057	2.3385
14.0	14.5	14.2	25.76	0.42	26.74	0.43	0.0462	0.0075	1.9930
16.0	16.5	16.2	30.45	0.47	32.01	0.49	0.0290	0.0060	1.7222
18.0	18.5	18.2	37.55	0.56	39.76	0.59	0.0227	0.0054	1.3805
20.0	20.5	20.2	46.66	0.71	49.04	0.75	0.0201	0.0054	1.0396
24.0	24.5	24.2	64.01	1.09	65.84	1.13	0.0294	0.0104	0.6057
28.0	28.5	28.2	84.02	1.76	87.93	1.94	0.0144	0.0073	0.3247
32.0	32.5	32.2	123.22	5.01	130.53	6.13	0.0084	0.0082	0.0958

Execution terminated : 0

C:\PB210>

Nulki Lake -- Analyst Joe Bennett (Dec. 1999) Diatom Relative Abundances (%)

Table with columns for taxa, code, and depth intervals (0.5, 2.5, 4.5, 6.5, 8.5, 10.5, 12.5, 14.5, 16.5, 18.5, 20.5, 22.5, 24.5, 26.5, 28.5, 30.5, 32.5, 34.5, 36.5, 38.5). The table lists numerous diatom taxa and their relative abundances across these depth intervals.