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**Reducing nutrients, organic micropollutants, antibiotic resistance, and toxicity in rural wastewater effluent with subsurface filtration treatment technology**

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1 **Abstract**

2           The ability of a sub-surface treatment filtration system to remove nutrients, thirty-  
3 nine organic contaminants, metals, and antibiotic resistant gene (ARG)-bearing organisms,  
4 and to attenuate acute toxicity of wastewater lagoon effluents, was assessed. Significant  
5 removal was observed for nutrients between the conventional primary and secondary  
6 sewage lagoons, with further average attenuation of 59% and 50% of ammonia and total  
7 phosphorus (TP), respectively, within the filter. Effluent concentrations of ammonia  
8 ranged from 0.4 to 2.6 mg/L and concentrations of TP from 1 to 4.1 mg/L, with decreasing  
9 acute toxicity from primary to secondary lagoons, and no toxicity observed in the filtration  
10 system based on Microtox<sup>®</sup> assays. Most organic micropollutants were also efficiently  
11 removed between the primary and secondary lagoons (e.g., up to 98% for atenolol).  
12 However, in general, little attenuation occurred within the filter for estrogenic compounds  
13 (e.g., 17  $\alpha$ -ethinylestradiol);  $\beta$ -blockers (e.g., metoprolol); antidepressants (e.g.,  
14 fluoxetine--Prozac); antibacterial agents (e.g., triclosan), non-steroidal anti-inflammatory  
15 drugs (e.g., diclofenac); lipid regulators (e.g., clofibrac acid); and macrolide (e.g.,  
16 clarithromycin) and sulfonamide (e.g., sulfamethazine) antibiotics; or metals (Cr, Cu, Fe,  
17 Mn, Ni, and Zn). This lack of removal was likely due to a minimal hydraulic residence time  
18 within the filter (~6 h) under current operating conditions. The lagoon treatment system  
19 effectively removed ~99% of sulfonamide resistant bacteria, but the filter both reduced  
20 tetracycline-resistant bacteria (~58%) in wastewater and harbored them in the biofilms, as  
21 relative abundances of *sul* and *tet* genes were greatest there. The filter also harbored  
22 nitrifying and denitrifying bacteria, respectively, contributing to N removal. These results

23 suggest that the constructed sub-surface treatment filtration system can provide a low-cost,  
24 low-maintenance, and effective means to reduce nutrient loading and improve microbial  
25 community structure and function.

26

27 **Keywords:** Wastewater lagoons; Subsurface Filtration; Pharmaceuticals; Antibiotic  
28 resistance genes (ARGs)

29

### 30 **1. Introduction**

31 With increased pressure on global water resources, concerns over wastewater  
32 contaminants and their effects on water quality continue to grow. Nutrient enrichment and  
33 subsequent eutrophication continue to threaten water quality in freshwater systems  
34 downstream of areas of agricultural intensification and urbanization (Smith, 2003). In  
35 addition, the ubiquitous presence of organic contaminants, including human- and  
36 veterinary- use pharmaceuticals, has been well-established to pose a hazard to aquatic  
37 organisms in receiving waters, and a challenge for wastewater treatment (Fent et al., 2006;  
38 Kolpin et al., 2002). Also of concern for wastewater treatment systems are organisms  
39 bearing antibiotic resistance genes (ARGs), which could promote future outbreaks by  
40 antibiotic-resistant pathogens (Rowan et al., 2010; WHO, 2000). To address the risks posed  
41 by these chemical and biological wastewater contaminants, effective treatment systems are  
42 required, along with an improved understanding of the mechanisms by which these  
43 contaminants can be removed prior to their entry into vulnerable ecosystems.

44 Wastewater lagoons are a common technology for sewage treatment in rural  
45 communities around North America (US EPA, 2002), including the province of Manitoba,

46 Canada (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004). In many communities, decisions  
47 around design, implementation, and management of lagoon systems were made before  
48 water quality impairment, such as eutrophication, was a widespread environmental concern  
49 resulting in a more stringent regulatory environment around releases. In addition,  
50 wastewater guidelines are very new for other ubiquitous emerging contaminants, such as  
51 chemical micropollutants and organisms bearing ARGs (Kolpin et al., 2002; Pruden, 2014),  
52 if guidelines exist at all. One example, intended to regulate release of synthetic estrogens  
53 (e.g.,  $17\alpha$ -ethinylestradiol in birth control pills) in the UK, may cost billions of dollars to  
54 achieve compliance (Owen and Jobling, 2012). In Canada, regulations are becoming stricter  
55 for phosphorus (P), total suspended solids (TSS), and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)  
56 (Government of Canada, 2012). Performing upgrades to existing lagoons to improve  
57 nutrient and emerging contaminant removal, the latter of which lagoons are not inherently  
58 designed to mitigate (Fent et al., 2006), can be costly. As a result, research to develop  
59 effective, low-cost, and low-maintenance polishing systems is vital for rural municipalities  
60 seeking to meet regulatory expectations within financial constraints.

61 Free-flow surface wetlands are a popular tool to polish wastewaters of small  
62 communities (Kadlec and Wallace, 2008), but these have drawbacks, especially in  
63 climatically challenged regions, i.e., harsh winters, or drought conditions. While relatively  
64 easy to construct, their contribution to removing wastewater contaminants beyond nutrients  
65 and suspended solids can be limited. For example, lack of maintenance of the natural plant  
66 assemblages and water flow in a surface wetland can restrict overall removal efficiency of  
67 pharmaceutical contaminants (Anderson et al., 2013). While some select emerging

68 contaminants are removed in free-flow wetlands (Breitholtz et al., 2012; Dordio et al.,  
69 2011), others such as ARGs may not be, possibly due to a lack of significant biomass  
70 separation from the waste stream (Anderson et al., 2013). The limited research to date  
71 suggests that aerobic environments promote growth of microbial consortia involved in  
72 nutrient and micropollutant elimination in surface (Dordio et al., 2011) and sub-surface  
73 flow wetlands (Avila et al., 2013).

74 A novel passive sub-surface filtration system was developed that can promote a  
75 more efficient aerobic state for removing wastewater contaminants. A pilot-scale facility  
76 was installed in 2009 for the Village of Dunnottar, Manitoba, Canada, near the shores of  
77 Lake Winnipeg. This system was designed to polish lagoon wastewater effluent by  
78 removing traditional wastewater contaminants (e.g., nutrients, coliforms), and serves as a  
79 model for a planned full-scale system. One outstanding question of interest was whether  
80 emerging wastewater contaminants common in sewage (e.g., ARGs and organic  
81 micropollutants, such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products, and pesticides) could  
82 be removed by the filters in conjunction with a traditional lagoon system, despite it (and  
83 many other wastewater treatment systems) not being expressly designed to do so.  
84 Furthermore, the potential, and extent of, reduction in observed toxicity by removing these  
85 emerging contaminants needed to be assessed. To this end, water was collected regularly  
86 throughout the treatment and discharge season (May-September) with the aim of  
87 determining: 1) removal efficiency of the current lagoon system; 2) efficiency of each filter  
88 configuration; and 3) possible toxicological impacts on receiving waters for traditional and  
89 emerging wastewater contaminants.

90

91 **2. Materials and Methods**

92 **2.1 Study location**

93 The wastewater facility used for this study is comprised of a primary and secondary  
94 lagoon system (Fig. 1) that provides treatment services for the Village of Dunnottar, a  
95 community in rural Manitoba. While the Village has fewer than 1000 permanent residents,  
96 summer use from cottagers, tourists, and other vacationers increases the population  
97 significantly relative to the winter season by up to several-fold. Municipal sewage from  
98 septic tanks at homes and cottages is transported by septic trucks to the primary lagoon  
99 during the active treatment season (~May until September). All valves are open between  
100 the primary and secondary lagoons, except for about three weeks before release when  
101 access to the secondary lagoon is closed and its water tested for regulatory compliance  
102 purposes.

103 An array (Fig. 2) containing four pilot-scale filter cells, each lined with an  
104 impermeable synthetic liner, was installed at the facility in 2009. Two of the filter cells  
105 (each 10 m long  $\times$  3.6 m wide  $\times$  1.2 m deep with a capacity of 44 m<sup>3</sup>) were used in the  
106 current study to test their efficiency in removal of nutrients, organic contaminants, and  
107 organisms imparting antibiotic resistance from municipal wastewater. The filter beds are  
108 lined with PVC and clay, have natural local meadow plants on the surface growing within  
109 an organic soil layer (0.4 m depth), and an unsaturated sub-surface filter comprised of a  
110 combination of natural substrates (e.g. soils, gravel, rocks) and artificial matrices (i.e.  
111 proprietary materials from Dillon Consulting Ltd., who designed and constructed the filter).  
112 Water is pumped from the secondary lagoon through a transfer pipe, which splits into the

113 two filter systems (“north” and “south”). This water is added to the filter surface through a  
114 transverse perforated distribution pipe, and allowed to percolate through the solid substrates  
115 to the bottom of the filter into a collection pipe. Treated wastewater is collected at the end  
116 of the filter, where water from both filters is then directed back into a single outflow point,  
117 which flows into a shallow creek. Testing was performed at a relatively high flow vertical  
118 rate of ca. 0.5 m/d, resulting in an overall water residence time of 6 h within the filter. No  
119 other energy or chemical inputs are performed during treatment.

120

## 121 **2.2 Sample collection**

122 The *in situ* conditions (e.g., temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, redox, nutrients,  
123 BOD, TSS) in the secondary lagoon and filters were assessed by Dillon, as part of their  
124 routine monitoring, by established methods (APHA, 2005). For other analyses, water was  
125 sampled from seven locations around the study site: ~15 m away from the sewage delivery  
126 location in the primary lagoon (“primary lagoon”), entry point into the filters from the  
127 secondary lagoon (“secondary lagoon”), at the outflow from the filters (“north filter” and  
128 “south filter”), at the point where the treated water from the filters joined (“outflow”), 20 m  
129 downstream of the outflow (“creek”), further downstream in the creek towards the highway  
130 (“highway”) (Fig. 1).

131 Sampling was conducted over the course of the licensed discharge season in 2013  
132 on June 4 and 18, July 2, 16, and 30, Aug. 13 and 27, and Sept. 10 and 24. Grab samples  
133 for measurement of organic compounds, metals, and toxicity (as indicated by Microtox<sup>®</sup>)  
134 were collected as single samples at each time and location, except for a rotating triplicate  
135 (i.e. one location had triplicates each sampling day). Water for organics was sampled in 1 L



136 pre-ashed glass amber bottles, and for Microtox<sup>®</sup> and metals, in 50 mL sterile Falcon tubes  
137 (pre-washed with 50% nitric acid for metals). Bottles were rinsed 3 times with sample  
138 water before being filled to the top with no headspace, except for Microtox<sup>®</sup> where  
139 headspace was left to allow for freezing at -20°C upon return to the laboratory. Both field  
140 blanks and laboratory blanks were employed to ensure quality of the analyses for organic  
141 compounds, metals, and Microtox<sup>®</sup> measurements.

142

### 143 ***2.3 Biofilm and water sample collection for ARGs***

144 For establishment of biofilms, samplers comprised of 600 grit sandpaper squares  
145 (3.8 cm length) were tied to weighted fishing line and deployed at the lagoon bottom at  
146 three locations: the secondary lagoon, the north filter, and the south filter, which were the  
147 same locations where water samples were taken. The sandpaper was sterilized with ethanol  
148 prior to deployment. Samplers were deployed on June 18 and sampled every 2 weeks either  
149 one at a time or in triplicate. A second round of samplers was also deployed in the  
150 secondary lagoon on July 16 and sampled on the same schedule as the first round.

151 Personnel wore gloves disinfected with 70% isopropanol while handling both ARGs  
152 and biofilm samplers. Collected biofilms were placed in 15 mL sterile falcon tubes. Grab  
153 samples of water for analysis of ARGs were collected in autoclaved 500 mL polyethylene  
154 bottles on all sampling days from all sampling locations, with rotating triplicate sampling.  
155 Bottles were rinsed 3 times with sample water before being filled to the top with no  
156 headspace. Samples were kept on ice for transport to the laboratory, and then they were  
157 filtered in a sterile environment. Filters and biofilm tubes were kept at -20°C until shipment  
158 to the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK, for analysis.

159

160 ***2.4 Determination of nutrient, pharmaceutical, and metal concentrations***

161           Following previously described methods (Carlson et al., 2013), grab samples for  
162 pharmaceutical analyses were processed by solid phase extraction using Oasis HLB  
163 (Waters, Milford MA). Ultra-high performance liquid chromatography-tandem mass  
164 spectrometry (UHPLC/MS/MS) with isotope dilution was used to quantify chemicals of  
165 interest in water samples, as described in previously published work (e.g., Anderson et al.,  
166 2013; Cardinal et al., 2013; Carlson et al., 2013). These compounds included a suite of  
167 thirty-nine commonly used pesticides and human or veterinary pharmaceuticals that are  
168 commonly found in wastewaters (MacLeod and Wong, 2010; Anderson et al., 2013;  
169 Carlson et al., 2013), including: estrogenic compounds (e.g., 17  $\alpha$ -ethinylestradiol);  $\beta$ -  
170 blockers (e.g., metoprolol); antidepressants (e.g., fluoxetine--Prozac); antibacterial agents  
171 (e.g., triclosan), non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., diclofenac); lipid regulators  
172 (e.g., clofibrac acid); and macrolide (e.g., clarithromycin) and sulfonamide (e.g.,  
173 sulfamethazine) antibiotics.

174           Concentrations of nutrients were determined by ALS Environmental Laboratory  
175 (Winnipeg, MB) using standard methods (APHA, 2005). Analysis of total dissolved metals  
176 was performed using flame atomic absorption spectroscopy (flame AAS) for Fe, Mn, and  
177 Zn with detection limits from 0.05-0.29 mg/L, or graphite furnace atomic absorption  
178 spectroscopy (GFAAS) for Ni, Cr, and Cu (APHA, 2005) with detection limits from 0.05-  
179 0.4  $\mu$ g/L.

180

181 **2.5 Quantifying abundances of bacterial genes**

182 Abundances of the ARGs were quantified in water and biofilm samples according to  
183 methods described in detail by Cardinal et al. (2013) and based upon previously established  
184 protocols (Knapp et al., 2010). The genes of interest were *sul1*, *sul2*, and *sul3* for  
185 sulfonamide resistance (Pei et al., 2006), and *tet1*, *tet2*, *tet3*, and *tet4* for tetracycline  
186 resistance (Ng et al., 2001). Additionally, genes related to nitrogen transformation were  
187 quantified: *nirK* (Henry et al., 2004) and *nirS* (Throbäck et al., 2004) for denitrifying  
188 bacteria and *amoA* for ammonia oxidation. 16S rRNA genes were quantified as a measure  
189 of 'total bacteria'. DNA was extracted using MoBio PowerDNA extraction kits (Cambio,  
190 Cambridge, UK) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Reaction efficiencies were  
191 determined to be most efficient (83-107%, depending on assays) at 1:100 dilutions with  
192 DNase-free water (Knapp et al., 2010), and all extracts were diluted accordingly.  
193 Quantitative PCR was run on a BioRad iQ cycler (BioRad, Hercules, CA). Standards and  
194 post-analytical melting curves were generated (Smith et al., 2004) to verify PCR reaction  
195 efficiencies, quantify results, and check for the presence of PCR artifacts.

196

197 **2.6 Toxicity assessment**

198 Sample toxicity was assessed using the Microtox<sup>®</sup> assay, which measures relative  
199 bioluminescence of the marine bacterium, *Vibrio fischeri*, following exposure to test  
200 mixtures. Samples collected for Microtox<sup>®</sup> analysis were analyzed according to adapted  
201 standard protocols with recommended QA/QC on a Microbics M500 Analyzer  
202 (Environment Canada, 1992). In brief, individual frozen samples (-20°C) were thawed at

203 4°C and the change in *Vibrio fischeri* bioluminescence was measured in triplicate at 100%  
204 sample strength. This deviation from the standard protocol, which analyzes a serial dilution  
205 of the test mixture and results in a generated IC<sub>50</sub> (Azur Environmental, 1995), was utilized  
206 to allow for a time- and cost-effective screening of the large sample set under investigation.  
207 All samples were pre-adjusted to optimal salinity for the microorganism and the response  
208 was compared to control after 15 minutes of exposure as the mean percent of control  
209 performance.

210

## 211 **2.7 Statistical analyses**

212 Concentrations of nutrients and organic compounds, as well as abundance of ARGs,  
213 were assessed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by Tukey's test where log,  
214 square root, or reciprocal-transformed data met the assumptions of normality and equal  
215 variance. Normality and equality of variance were assessed by Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's  
216 median tests, respectively, and non-normal data were analyzed by Kruskal-Wallis rank  
217 tests. Data were analyzed using SigmaPlot 11.0 (San Jose, CA) and are presented as mean ±  
218 standard deviation (SD) unless otherwise indicated. Differences were considered significant  
219 at p<0.05.

220

## 221 **3. Results**

### 222 **3.1 Water quality and nutrients**

223 Nutrients and selected water quality parameters (Table 1) were monitored on six  
224 occasions in the secondary lagoon and at the confluence point of the outflow from the two  
225 filters (Dillon Consulting Limited, 2014). Average influent pH was 8.8 and average effluent

226 pH was 7.8. Nitrate + nitrite was not detected in grab samples at any time (< 0.35 mg/L).  
227 Post-filtration concentrations of ammonia ranged from 0.4 to 2.6 mg/L and concentrations  
228 of TP ranged from 1 to 4.1 mg/L, representing mean respective reductions of 59% and 50%  
229 compared to the secondary lagoon, except for the increase observed on July 16, 2013 for  
230 ammonia. Total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN) was also reduced by 47% with passage through  
231 the filter. Other improvements in water quality with passive filtration included reductions in  
232 biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) (>25% mean reduction), chemical oxygen demand  
233 (59%), total dissolved solids (TDS) (4%), total suspended solids (TSS) (62%), and fecal  
234 coliforms (92%). There was no observed reduction in total coliforms from the secondary  
235 lagoon to post-filtration between mid-June and mid-July (Table 1). However, after the end  
236 of July, coliform counts were reduced by filtration by an average of 91% over the  
237 remaining study period.

238

### 239 **3.2 Pharmaceutical concentrations**

240 Nearly all of the thirty-nine target organic compounds were detected at least once in  
241 the system, with measured concentrations in the ng/L range (Table S1). Atenolol,  
242 diclofenac, ibuprofen, naproxen, and sulfamethazine were only detected in the primary  
243 lagoon, while propranolol, metoprolol, triclosan, and trimethoprim were also occasionally  
244 detected in the secondary lagoon. Most other compounds were detected sporadically with  
245 no obvious temporal or spatial trends (Table S1). None of the target compounds were  
246 consistently removed by passage through either of the filters.

247 Concentrations of atrazine, a corn herbicide, decreased significantly over time at all  
248 sites except the primary lagoon and highway (Fig. 3A,  $p < 0.05$ ). Concentrations of

249 carbamazepine, an anticonvulsant, were relatively consistent across all sites, with no  
250 significant changes over time at any site (Fig. 3B,  $p>0.05$ ). The antibiotic clarithromycin  
251 was detected in the two filters and outflow site, as well as inconsistently in the primary  
252 lagoon, but there was no obvious trend in concentration over time or location (Fig. 3C,  
253  $p>0.05$ ). In the case of gemfibrozil, a lipid-regulator, significant removal was observed  
254 between the primary and secondary lagoons (Fig. 3D,  $p<0.05$ ). In addition, a significant  
255 increase in concentration was observed over time in the primary lagoon ( $p<0.05$ ),  
256 suggesting increased inputs over the season. For the antibiotic sulfamethoxazole, the  
257 greatest reduction in concentration occurred between the primary and secondary lagoons  
258 (Fig. 3E,  $p<0.01$ ). While there was some evidence of removal by the filters, changes in  
259 concentrations of sulfamethoxazole were not significant between the secondary lagoon and  
260 the filters. Finally, sulfapyridine was detected in the primary lagoon at every sampling time  
261 but concentrations were significantly lower in the secondary lagoon (Fig. 3F,  $p<0.05$ ) and  
262 other sites (when detections occurred).

263

### 264 **3.3 Metal concentrations**

265 All six of the metals detected in an initial screening of the primary lagoon (Cr, Cu,  
266 Fe, Mn, Ni, and Zn) were also detected in at least one sample from each of the other  
267 sampling locations (Fig. 4). Concentration ranges were as follows: Cr – 0.18 to 2.1  $\mu\text{g/L}$ ;  
268 Cu – 0.05 to 3.9  $\mu\text{g/L}$ ; Fe – 0.3 to 1.6  $\text{mg/L}$ ; Mn – 0.05 to 1.0  $\text{mg/L}$ ; Ni – 2.3 to 3.8  $\mu\text{g/L}$ ;  
269 and Zn – 0.08 to 0.3  $\text{mg/L}$ . There was no evidence for targeted removal of metals by the

270 filters, and the small number of samples (n=1-3) collected during each sampling event  
271 precluded statistical comparisons over time at individual sites.

272

### 273 **3.4 Abundances of ARGs**

274 Measured abundances of 16S rRNA genes, representing “total” bacterial  
275 populations, in water samples were greatest in the primary lagoon ( $10^{7.3}$  gene copies/mL).  
276 Bacterial gene abundance was reduced by 80% in the secondary lagoon (to  $10^{6.9}$  copies/mL)  
277 and by 89% when compared to the outfall (Table 2). Concentrations in the filtration units  
278 were slightly lower on average than the outflow, but differences were not statistically  
279 significant ( $p>0.05$ ).

280 Individual genes, or clusters of genes, were analyzed and the results were summed  
281 (Table S2) according to resistance types (i.e., sulfonamide or tetracycline) to facilitate  
282 assessment of resistance patterns. Of the ARGs harvested from the water samples, the  
283 greatest abundances of tet<sup>R</sup> (sum of tetracycline resistance genes) were found in the  
284 secondary lagoon. These abundances were nearly 50% higher than in samples from the  
285 primary lagoon and significantly greater than in samples from downstream “natural” areas  
286 (i.e., “creek” and “highway” locations) ( $p<0.05$ ). However, concentrations were reduced by  
287 58% by the outfall from the secondary lagoon. Abundances of sul<sup>R</sup> (sum of sulfonamide  
288 resistance genes) were greatest in the primary lagoon ( $p<0.001$ ). These genes immediately  
289 declined in abundance (by 99%) in the secondary lagoon effluent, and levels remained  
290 constant through the remainder of the treatment process ( $p>0.05$ ). Among the three  
291 sulfonamide gene determinants measured, *sul2* was most prevalent. Tetracycline gene  
292 clusters tended to be more evenly distributed among the different gene determinants.

293 To facilitate further analysis and account for differences in prevalence of bacteria  
294 throughout the treatment process, abundances of genes were divided by the abundance of  
295 16S rRNA genes to represent relative gene abundances. Greater proportions of resistant  
296 bacteria were found in the filtration units, although the primary lagoon also had elevated  
297  $\text{sul}^{\text{R}}$  (0.8%). In addition, the filter units had more than twice higher relative abundances of  
298  $\text{sul}^{\text{R}}/16\text{S}$  (0.22-0.24%) than the outflow (0.10%).  $\text{Tet}^{\text{R}}/16\text{S}$  values averaged 0.28% and  
299 0.42% in north and south filters, respectively, while all other treatments had relative gene  
300 abundances of  $\text{tet}^{\text{R}}$  less than 0.12%. These findings suggest a greater potential for ARG-  
301 bearing bacteria to exist in the primary lagoon and within the filters.

302 Biofilms were also sampled in the secondary lagoon and the two filter units.  
303 Abundances of 16S rRNA genes (i.e., total bacteria) averaged between  $10^{6.8}$  and  $10^{7.3}$   
304  $\text{gene}/\text{cm}^2$ , with no significant differences among sites ( $p>0.05$ ) (Table 2, Table S2). Similar  
305 abundances of ARGs were found in biofilms collected from the secondary lagoon and north  
306 filter unit ( $\text{tet}^{\text{R}}/16\text{S}$  rRNA genes ranged from 0.3-0.8%, and  $\text{sul}^{\text{R}}/16\text{S}$  rRNA genes  
307 represented 0.26-0.45%), with the south filter having significantly fewer resistant genes for  
308 both ARG types (approximately 0.01% of 16S rRNA genes;  $p<0.01$ ).

309

### 310 ***3.5 Abundances of denitrification and nitrification genes***

311 In addition to ARGs, three genes related to nitrogen cycling processes in wastewater  
312 treatment were also quantified: *nirK*, *nirS*, and *amoA* (Table 2). The *nir* genes encode for  
313 nitrite-reductases, enzymes responsible for the conversion of nitrite to nitric oxide within  
314 the denitrification pathway. The enzyme *nirS* is a non-haeme iron-containing enzyme, and



315 *nirK* contains copper. A subunit of ammonia monooxygenase (*amoA*), which is required for  
316 the first step in nitrification, is found in lithoautotrophic ammonia oxidizers.

317       Relative abundances of nitrite reductase genes (both *nirS* and *nirK*) ranged from ~1  
318 to 22% in the water, and ~4 to 31% in the biofilms. Abundances of *nirS* were often 1-3  
319 orders of magnitude greater than *nirK*; as such, it represents the dominant denitrifying gene  
320 in the community. Relative abundances of denitrifying populations were generally greater  
321 in the filter units for both the biofilm (log-transformed ANOVA,  $p < 0.05$ ) and the water  
322 ( $p < 0.001$ ). Relative abundances of ammonia oxidizing bacteria were also greater in close  
323 proximity to the filters (~3-6% of "total bacteria", versus <1% elsewhere). The values were  
324 significantly higher for the community in the water ( $p < 0.05$ ), but not quite significant for  
325 biomass ( $p = 0.127$ ).

326

### 327 **3.6 Toxicity of wastewater towards bacteria**

328       With the exception of the primary lagoon and creek samples, the average  
329 bioluminescence of *Vibrio fischeri*, represented as percent of control, was greater than 90%  
330 (Table 3, Table S3). In the primary lagoon, *V. fischeri* bioluminescence was generally  
331 about 50% of the control response. After water had been treated in the secondary lagoon  
332 and moved into the north and south filters, responses were  $\geq 90\%$  of control, indicating  
333 recovery and conditions suitable to the promotion of bacterial growth. The notable  
334 exception to this trend was the creek sample which elicited *V. fischeri* bioluminescence that  
335 was  $\approx 42\%$  of control. As a point of reference, water from Lake Winnipeg ("lake blank"  
336 sample, Table S3) elicited a response that was  $\approx 95\%$  of controls.

337

338 **4. Discussion**

339 ***4.1 Water quality and nutrients***

340 Overall, the passive filtration system achieved some degree of nutrient removal and  
341 improved the water quality of effluent from the lagoon system. Removal efficiencies in  
342 2013 were on par with that observed in prior years (e.g., at least 50-75% above existing  
343 lagoon treatment) for BOD, nitrogen, phosphorus, and TSS (Village of Dunnottar, 2012).  
344 Concentrations of ammonia and TP in the final effluent (Table 1) were generally within  
345 discharge water quality guidelines, as were pH and TSS (6.5 to 9.0 and 25 mg/L,  
346 respectively) (CCME, 2011). It should be noted, however, that samples from the secondary  
347 lagoon typically met or exceeded the available guidelines already for Water Quality for the  
348 Protection of Aquatic Life (CCME, 2011), as could be expected from an operational  
349 wastewater lagoon (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004). Therefore, the system  
350 was providing sufficient nutrient removal without the additional filter, but use of filtration  
351 further improves the effluent quality entering the environment.

352 In terms of coliforms, while fecal coliforms were consistently removed by filtration,  
353 there was a trend of increased total coliforms with filtration during the first half of the  
354 season and decreased total coliforms during the second part of the season. In the secondary  
355 lagoon, there was a considerable spike in total coliforms in July and August (counts of  
356 15,000, 110,000, and 9,300 per L vs. 210-750 per L earlier in the season, Table 1). These  
357 counts were reduced to 430-2,300 per L with filtration, while the increases with filtration  
358 earlier in the season were to 930-4,300 per L, so final effluents were generally fairly  
359 consistent in their total coliform contents across the sampling season. The guidelines for  
360 fecal and total coliforms outlined on Manitoba Conservation's wastewater license for the

361 facility were set at 200 and 1,500 per 100 mL of sample, respectively. Fecal and total  
362 coliform counts in effluent from the filtration system were below these guideline values, as  
363 were nearly all counts in the secondary lagoon, which would be expected for a well-  
364 operated lagoon system (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004; US EPA, 2002).

365

#### 366 *4.2 Pharmaceutical detection in, and removal from, wastewater*

367 The concentrations of pharmaceuticals measured in grab samples of receiving  
368 waters from the Dunnottar system were generally consistent with those from other  
369 wastewater systems in Manitoba (Table 4) (Anderson et al., 2013; Carlson et al., 2013) and  
370 elsewhere (Conkle et al., 2008; Kolpin et al., 2002; MacLeod and Wong, 2010). Many  
371 detectable compounds had highest concentrations in the primary lagoon and were not  
372 detected in the creek or highway sites. Exceptions were atrazine, carbamazepine,  
373 gemfibrozil, and sulfamethoxazole, which tended to persist throughout the treatment  
374 process and were released in the effluent, though concentrations had been reduced from  
375 those measured in the primary lagoon.

376 Based on hazard quotients (HQs) calculated in previous studies (Anderson et al.,  
377 2013; Carlson et al., 2013), none of the compounds detected in the outfall or downstream of  
378 the effluent discharge point would pose a significant hazard for macrophytes, aquatic  
379 invertebrates, or fish. Calculated HQs ranged from 0.01 to 2.4 in the worst-case scenario of  
380 the primary lagoon, with both sulfamethoxazole and gemfibrozil exceeding the threshold of  
381 1 (HQs of 2.4 and 1.2, respectively). However, the greatest concentrations of  
382 sulfamethoxazole and gemfibrozil measured in the outflow, creek, or highway sites,  
383 calculated with the toxicity value of the most sensitive aquatic species yielded HQs of 0.78

384 and 0.12, respectively. This observation suggests that concentrations of these  
385 pharmaceuticals are sufficiently low enough in effluent from the wastewater system that  
386 they would not be expected to pose a hazard to aquatic life in receiving waters. It should be  
387 noted that current HQs are based primarily on acute toxicity endpoints, so it is unknown if  
388 concentrations observed in this study play a role for subchronic endpoints e.g., disruption  
389 of Na/K-ATPase activity, as observed in fish with ng/g levels of fluoxetine (Lajeunesse et  
390 al., 2011).

391         The widespread detection of atrazine across sites at the low levels quantified was  
392 consistent with its use in the region and perhaps disposal into collected wastewater. This  
393 trend was also observed for atrazine in the Dead Horse Creek system (Carlson et al., 2013),  
394 which receives treated wastewater from several rural communities and ultimately flows to  
395 Lake Winnipeg. The observed persistence of carbamazepine over time is consistent with  
396 steady use patterns and a relatively recalcitrant compound in the environment (Conkle et  
397 al., 2008; Hai et al., 2011). A decline in the concentration of carbamazepine in the primary  
398 lagoon was reported at the end of the study, likely a result of reduced inputs as cottages  
399 were closed down and temporary residents were no longer contributing to the sewage  
400 lagoon. In contrast, there was an increase in the concentration of gemfibrozil in the primary  
401 lagoon over time. However, there was also a distinct decline at the very end of the study,  
402 which may again be due to a declining population of cottagers at the end of the season.  
403 Much of the gemfibrozil present in the primary lagoon dissipated before water entered the  
404 secondary lagoon, which is consistent with previously observed dissipation in aeration  
405 basins (Conkle et al., 2008).

406 Concentrations of the sulfonamide antibiotics sulfamethoxazole and sulfapyridine  
407 declined in the primary lagoon over time, which may be due to increased photodegradation  
408 (Ryan et al., 2011) as light intensity and duration of daylight in the summer months.  
409 Similar reductions in concentrations of these antibiotics have been reported in primary  
410 aeration basins (Conkle et al., 2008) and a model surface constructed wetland (Anderson et  
411 al., 2013).

412 Because of the large and variable transient cottager population, whose wastewater  
413 inputs to the facility are ill-defined, it is difficult to determine if treated wastewater  
414 concentrations correlated to per-capita use and loading of organic micropollutants, as  
415 shown at other sewage lagoons in Canada (MacLeod and Wong, 2010). Further  
416 complicating any such correlation is the fact that unlike lagoon systems receiving inputs by  
417 municipal sewage collection pipes (MacLeod and Wong, 2010; Carlson et al., 2013), most  
418 wastewater inputs to the Dunnottar system come from septic systems, in which residence  
419 time of wastewaters and degradation of micropollutants is unknown and likely quite  
420 variable (Anderson et al., 2013).

421

#### 422 **4.3 Metals**

423 Iron and zinc were present within the system at concentrations surpassing their  
424 respective guidelines (0.3 and 0.03 mg/L, respectively) for the protection of aquatic life  
425 (CCME, 2011), while Cu and Cr may have exceeded guideline values depending on their  
426 speciation (2 µg/L for Cu, depending on hardness, and 8.9 µg/L for Cr). Concentrations of  
427 Ni were below guideline values (minimum value 25 µg/L depending on hardness) and there

428 is not currently a water quality guideline for Mn. Concentrations of metals tended to be  
429 quite variable, both over time and between sampling locations within the system. The filters  
430 did not significantly affect metals, but this trend cannot be further explained without  
431 additional knowledge of the proprietary materials within the filters themselves.  
432 There are no heavy industries and no indication of man-made pollution in the area to  
433 contribute to the load of metals in the water treatment system. The concentrations of metals  
434 found are likely consistent with natural levels in this part of Manitoba.

435

#### 436 **4.4 Removal of ARGs**

437 Abundances of sulfonamide and tetracycline resistance genes in the Dunnottar  
438 lagoon system were consistent with those measured in a nearby lagoon and constructed  
439 wetland wastewater treatment system located in Grand Marais, Manitoba (Anderson et al.,  
440 2013). In our study system, there was an overall reduction of ARG-harboring bacteria (in  
441 terms of absolute abundances) for downstream areas, especially in terms of *sul*-resistance,  
442 which declined by two-orders of magnitude. Removal of total bacteria by wastewater  
443 lagoons under summer operating conditions has been demonstrated in other systems (e.g.,  
444 Mezrioui and Baleux, 1994), including one serving Grand Forks, North Dakota (Walter and  
445 Vennes, 1985), which ultimately feeds into Lake Winnipeg.

446 Comparing conditions between the outflow and secondary lagoon, there was a 75%  
447 reduction of total bacteria, as measured by 16S-rRNA gene abundances, in water passing  
448 through the subsurface filters; however, there were variable effects on abundances of  
449 antimicrobial resistant organisms. While total tet<sup>R</sup> declined ( $T_{10} = 4.08$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), total sul<sup>R</sup>  
450 remained similar ( $T_{10} = 0.30$ ,  $p = 0.77$ ). Following the 99% reduction between the two

451 lagoons, sul<sup>R</sup> concentrations through the subsurface filters likely represent background  
452 abundances, with further removal being unlikely. Unfortunately, wastewater systems have a  
453 highly variable ability to reduce antimicrobial resistance (e.g., Mezrioui and Baleaux,  
454 1994). For example, Christgen et al. (2015) inversely found high rates of tet<sup>R</sup> decline, but  
455 minimal sul<sup>R</sup>, in anaerobic-aerobic sequencing reactors. Generally, resistant bacteria  
456 numbers decline in wastewater treatment as bacteria are removed; but patterns require  
457 further investigations, as it remains a function of bacterial community, operating conditions  
458 and bioreactor design (e.g, Christgen et al. 2015).

459 Baquero and Canto (2008) refer to wastewater and its biological components as one  
460 of four genetic reactors in the development of antibiotic resistance. Wastewater treatment  
461 plants stabilize waste materials and reduce overall bacterial load discharged to receiving  
462 waters, but evidence suggests that resistance rates (ratio of resistant bacteria to total  
463 bacteria) may be amplified in effluent (Czekalslo et al., 2012; Lachmayr et al., 2009;  
464 Martinez and Baquero, 2000). While fewer bacteria were entering the environment at the  
465 outflow of our study system, a greater proportion was found to carry genes for tetracycline  
466 or sulfonamide (or both), which corroborates concerns from many other wastewater  
467 treatment systems (Czekalslo et al., 2012; Lachmayr et al., 2009; Martinez and Baquero,  
468 2000).

469 In removing bacteria from this system, there was an accumulation of genes in the  
470 filter systems and formation of biofilms, especially in the north filter. Wastewater  
471 treatments provide optimal conditions for development and dissemination of ARGs via  
472 horizontal genetic processes in dense microbial communities (Schlüter et al., 2007) and  
473 continuous exposure to chemical stressors (e.g., pharmaceuticals, metals, and detergents).

474 Harboured of resistant bacteria into peripheral biofilms has been observed previously  
475 (Engemann et al., 2008; Zhang et al. 2009). The cause for gene-density differences between  
476 filters remains unknown, but could be attributable to conditions such as biofilm age and  
477 bacterial composition (Patel, 2005). However, the removal and disposal of accumulated  
478 biomass material could help alleviate the risk of downstream movement of ARGs (Pruden  
479 et al., 2013). As such, the technology has some promise of reducing loading of ARGs to the  
480 environment with proper operational management.

481

#### 482 ***4.5 Maintenance of nitrogen-transforming bacteria***

483 In the current study, substrates for harvesting biofilm samples were inserted at the  
484 start of the filtration operations, and the first samples were collected two weeks later. While  
485 it requires time for the biofilm communities to establish, the population of microorganisms  
486 (based on gene abundances) appeared to have stabilized by July 20 (Fig. S1). Relative  
487 abundances of *nirS*, *nirK*, and *amoA* genes were consistent with other studies involving  
488 aerobic wastewater treatment systems (You, 2005; Limpiyakorn et al., 2011; Chom et al.,  
489 2011).

490 Many wastewater treatment processes rely on the retention of high densities of  
491 bacteria in biofilms to reduce the concentrations of dissolved organic matter and nutrients.  
492 Further, floc- or biofilm-attached growth microorganisms allow slow-growth populations to  
493 be retained in the system and avoid wash-out conditions, especially under low HRT such as  
494 the subsurface treatment system (HRT = 6 hr). This is often the case for the ammonia  
495 oxidizing bacteria, which commonly occur floc- or biofilm-attached in freshwater and  
496 wastewater systems (generation time ~17 hrs; Koops et al. 2006). Further, biofilms create



497 micro-environmental gradients, such as dissolved oxygen, which may enhance the  
498 performance of bacteria. Diffusional limitations of dissolved oxygen often exist within the  
499 biofilms (e.g., Costerton et al., 1994). Communities of ammonia oxidizing bacteria, which  
500 produce nitrite as a metabolic by-product, locate themselves in aerobic zones (near root  
501 zones). In areas of reduced oxygen, either within biofilms (Münch et al., 1996) or within  
502 the soil matrix (Brix, 1987), the oxidized nitrogen by-products (nitrate and nitrite) can be  
503 reduced by denitrifying bacteria to N<sub>2</sub>. However, limited nitrite and nitrate concentrations  
504 in the effluent suggest poor nitrification, and the presence of genes does not guarantee  
505 biochemical activity, but does suggest a developing readiness for the system. Whether  
506 caused by simultaneous nitrification-denitrification process (e.g., Yoo et al., 1999),  
507 adsorption of ammonia to particles (e.g., Brix, 1987), or the assimilatory nitrogen reactions,  
508 ammonia levels are effectively reduced with minimal nitrite and nitrate accumulation.

509

#### 510 ***4.6 Toxicity of wastewater towards bacteria***

511 Represented as *V. fischeri* bioluminescence in test samples relative to controls, the  
512 input water in the primary lagoon elicited the greatest toxic response with an average of  
513 ~50% bioluminescence (Table 3, Table S3). Inhibition of bacterial luminescence using the  
514 Microtox<sup>®</sup> assay has been reported at levels between 15 and 100% in raw wastewaters  
515 entering wastewater treatment facilities (Katsoyiannis and Samara, 2007 and references  
516 therein). Therefore, the inhibition observed in the primary lagoon of the Dunnottar system  
517 is expected and is moderate. All other sample sites, with the exception of the creek, elicited  
518 >90% bioluminescence from the exposed bacteria, indicating effective water treatment.  
519 Attenuation of toxicity within the secondary lagoon is also consistent with trends observed

520 in the secondary sedimentation stage of a sewage treatment plant in Greece (Katsoyiannis  
521 and Samara, 2007). The elevated toxicity in the creek sample (average bioluminescence of  
522 42% of control) was an unexpected result given the greater levels of luminescence observed  
523 in the secondary lagoon, north and south filter, outflow, and highway samples, in addition  
524 to the fact that chemical analyses of this sample did not indicate elevated levels of any of  
525 the target compounds relative to the remainder of the sample set. As such, the observed  
526 toxicity in the creek sample is not likely due to inefficient treatment by the Dunnottar  
527 facility, but warrants further investigation.

528

## 529 **5. Conclusions**

530 The subsurface filters were effective at removing nutrients, but residence time under  
531 the current operational conditions was likely insufficient to provide effective removal of  
532 pharmaceuticals. The majority of removal of pharmaceuticals from the wastewater typically  
533 occurred in the primary lagoon, so the standard lagoon features without the additional  
534 filters do have the ability to remove chemical micropollutants to some degree. As well, the  
535 presence of the filters did not have a detrimental effect on concentrations of  
536 pharmaceuticals. In general, the Dunnottar wastewater treatment lagoon system removed  
537 bacteria well, in addition to reducing acute toxicity as characterized via the Microtox<sup>®</sup>  
538 assay. The filters promoted growth of desirable bacteria (i.e., denitrifying and nitrifying  
539 bacteria) and significantly reduced the abundances of antibiotic resistances genes.  
540 However, in removing the ARGs from wastewater, the filters do harbor these genes, which  
541 will affect the way in which filters must be cleaned and ultimately disposed of once they

542 reach their life expectancy. Overall, the filters were effective at removing nutrients and  
543 certain ARGs from rural wastewater and are worth exploring further. Additional  
544 optimization of operating conditions may result in improved removal of pharmaceutical  
545 compounds as well and will be investigated as part of a full-scale installation in the near  
546 future.

547

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## Figure captions

Fig. 1: Map of study site and its relative position within the province of Manitoba, Canada. Sampling was performed at the primary lagoon, secondary lagoon, north filter, south filter, outflow, creek, and highway (main road to the north of the site). North and south filter sampling sites are located on east side of filters (see Fig. 2), but are depicted here for clarity on west side of filter.

Fig. 2: Schematic of pilot-scale filter (not to scale). Wastewater flow paths indicated by grey arrows.

Fig. 3: Concentrations of (A) atrazine, (B) carbamazepine, (C) clarithromycin, (D) gemfibrozil, (E) sulfamethoxazole, and (F) sulfapyridine at sampling sites in the lagoons, filter, and discharge stream over summer and fall 2013. Wastewater in the secondary lagoon, filter, and creek were not available on September 24, 2013.

Fig. 4: Box plot of metal concentrations in the primary and secondary lagoons. Centerline is median concentrations, top and bottom of boxes are 25th and 75th percentiles respectively, and top and bottom whiskers are 5th and 95th percentiles respectively.

Figure 1

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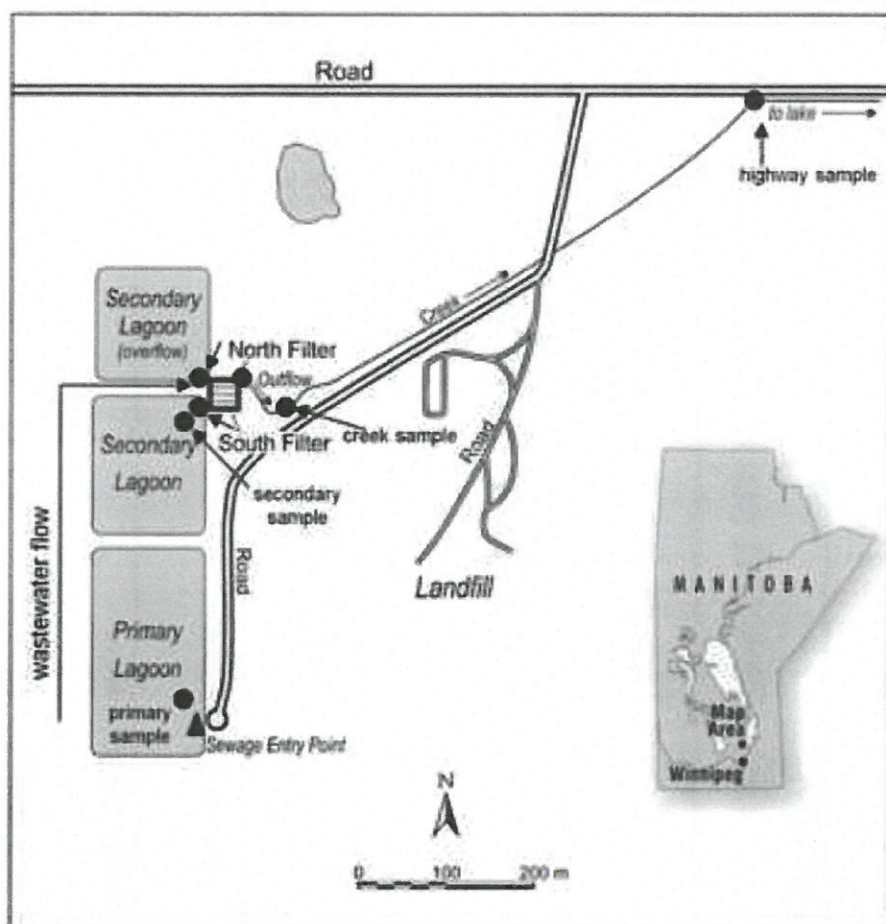


Figure 2  
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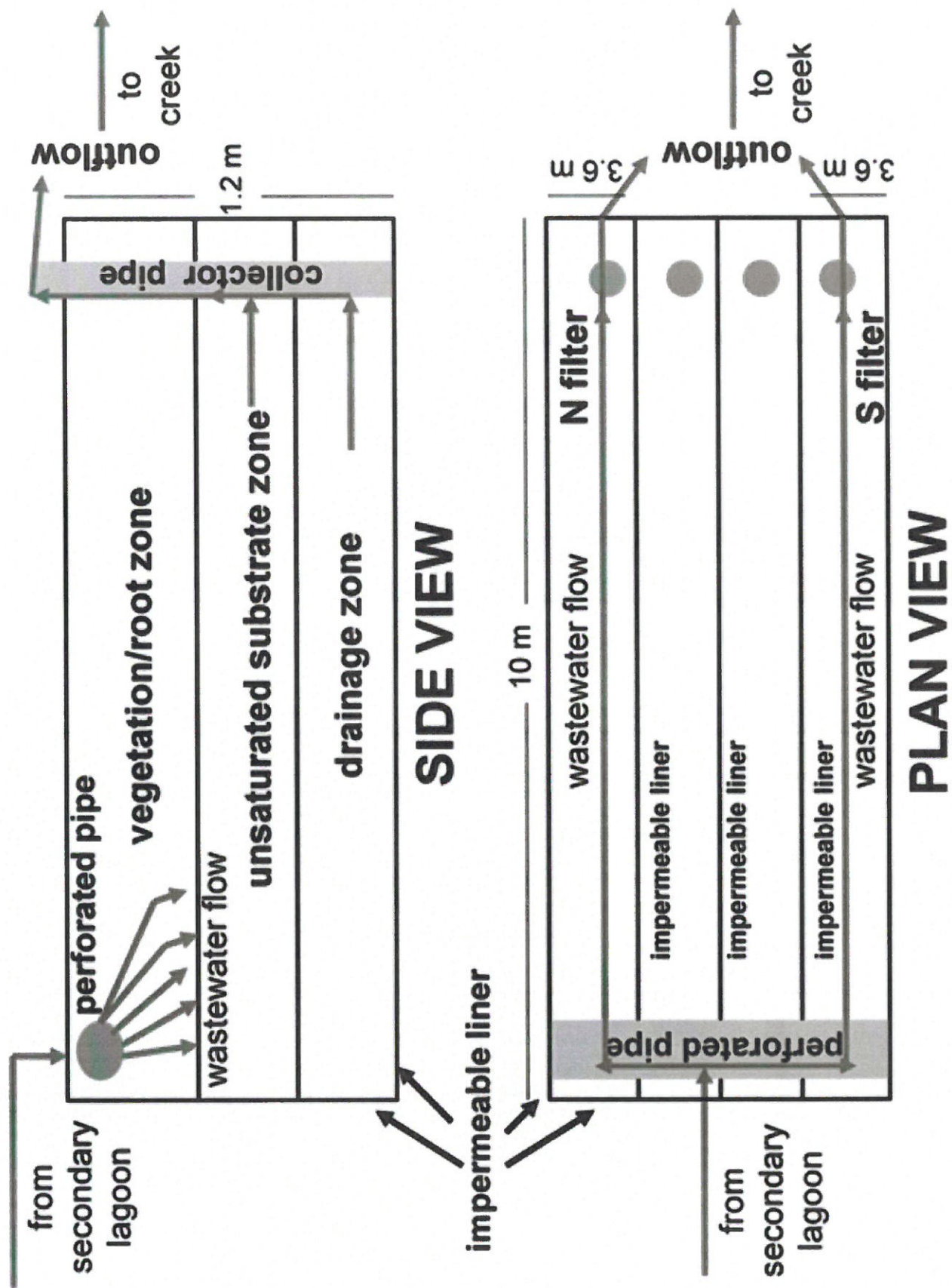


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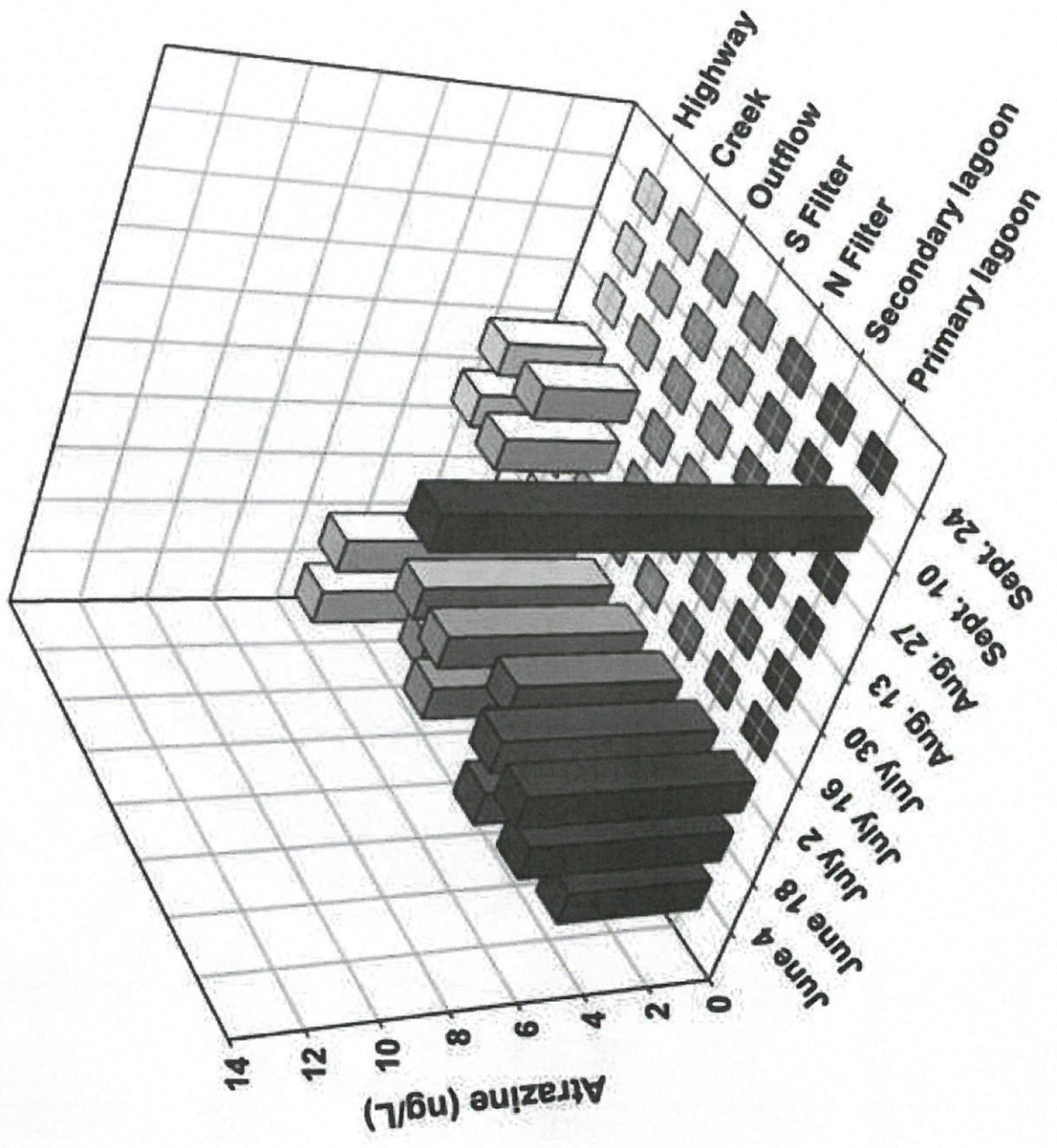


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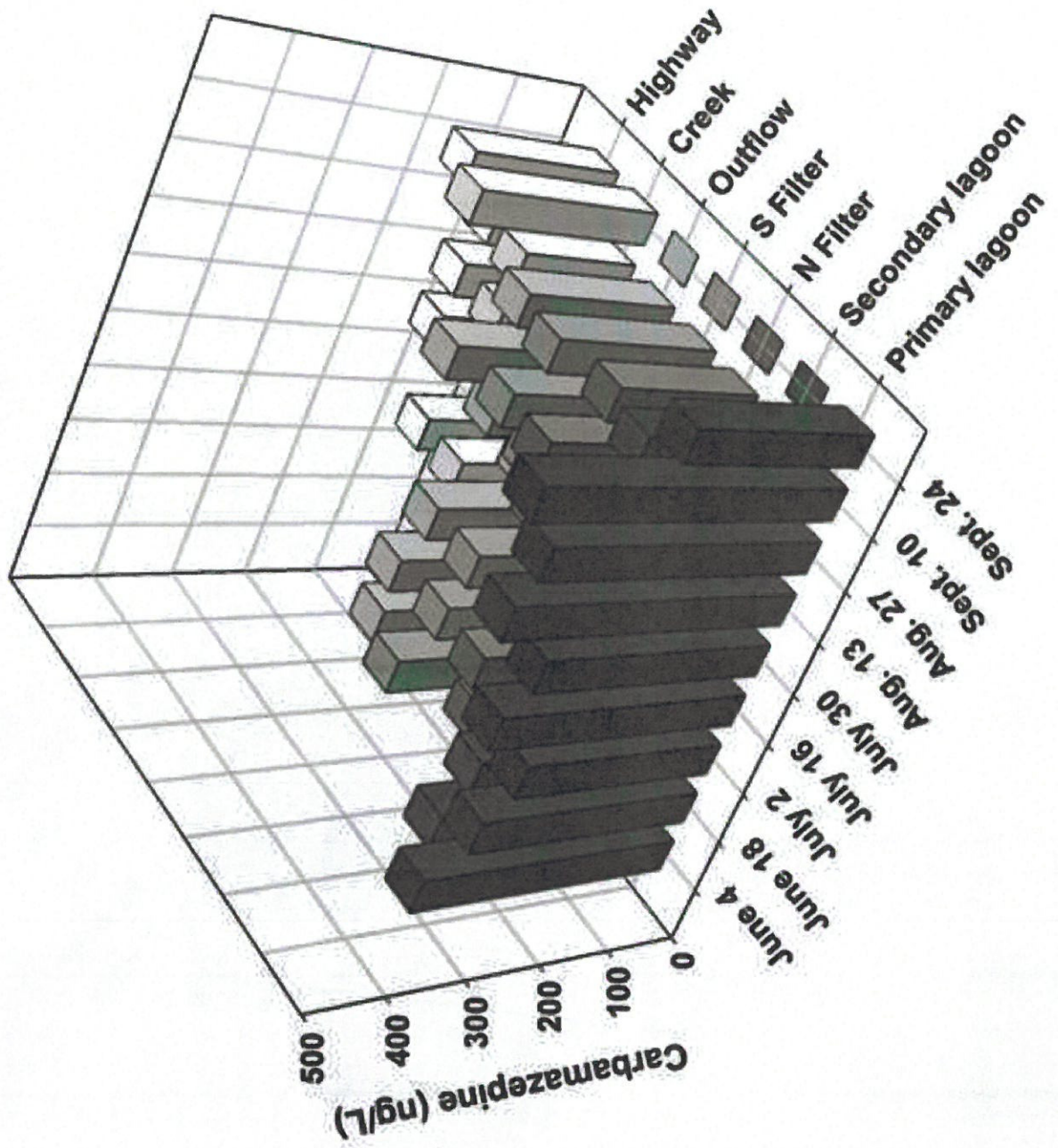


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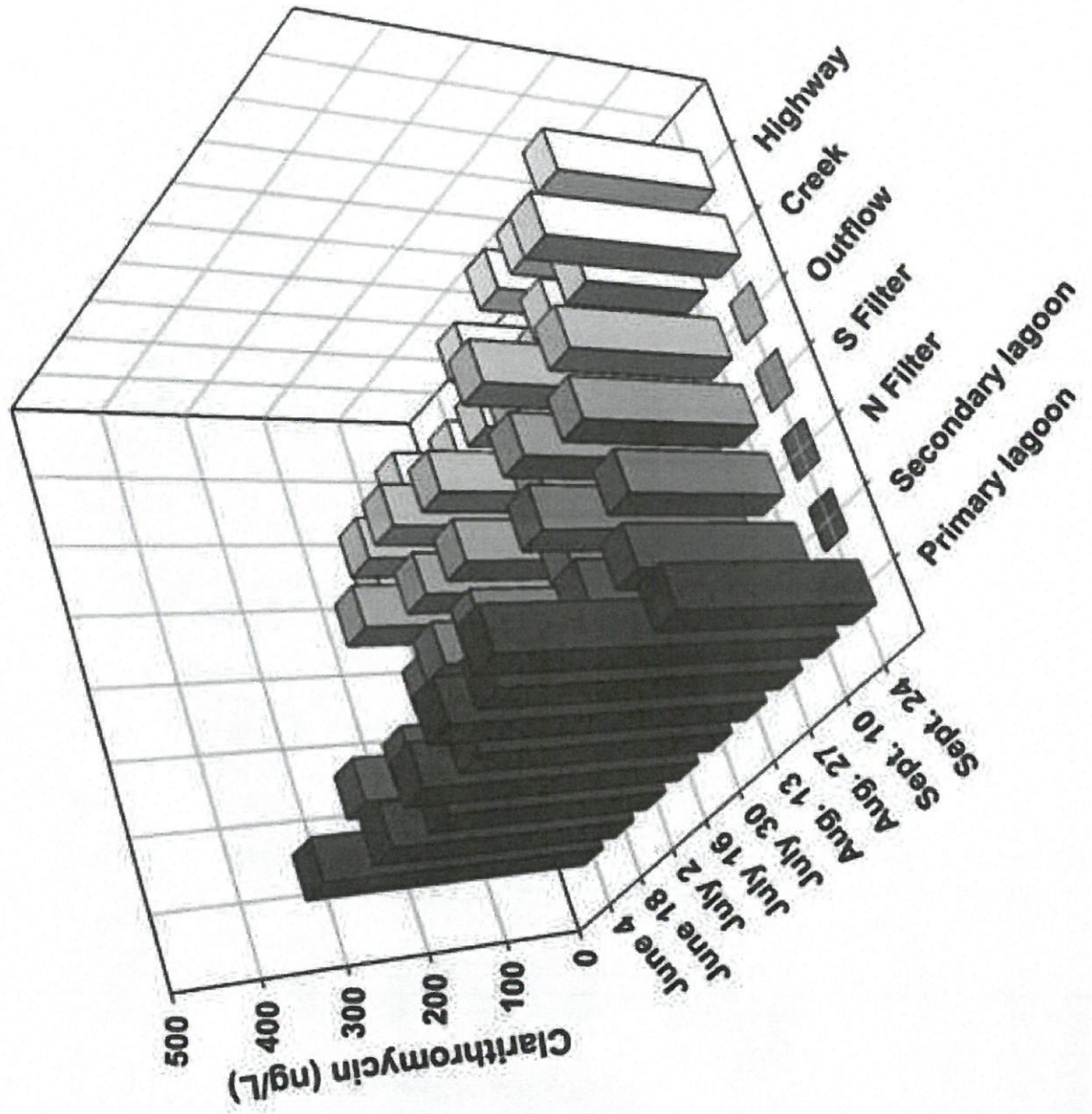




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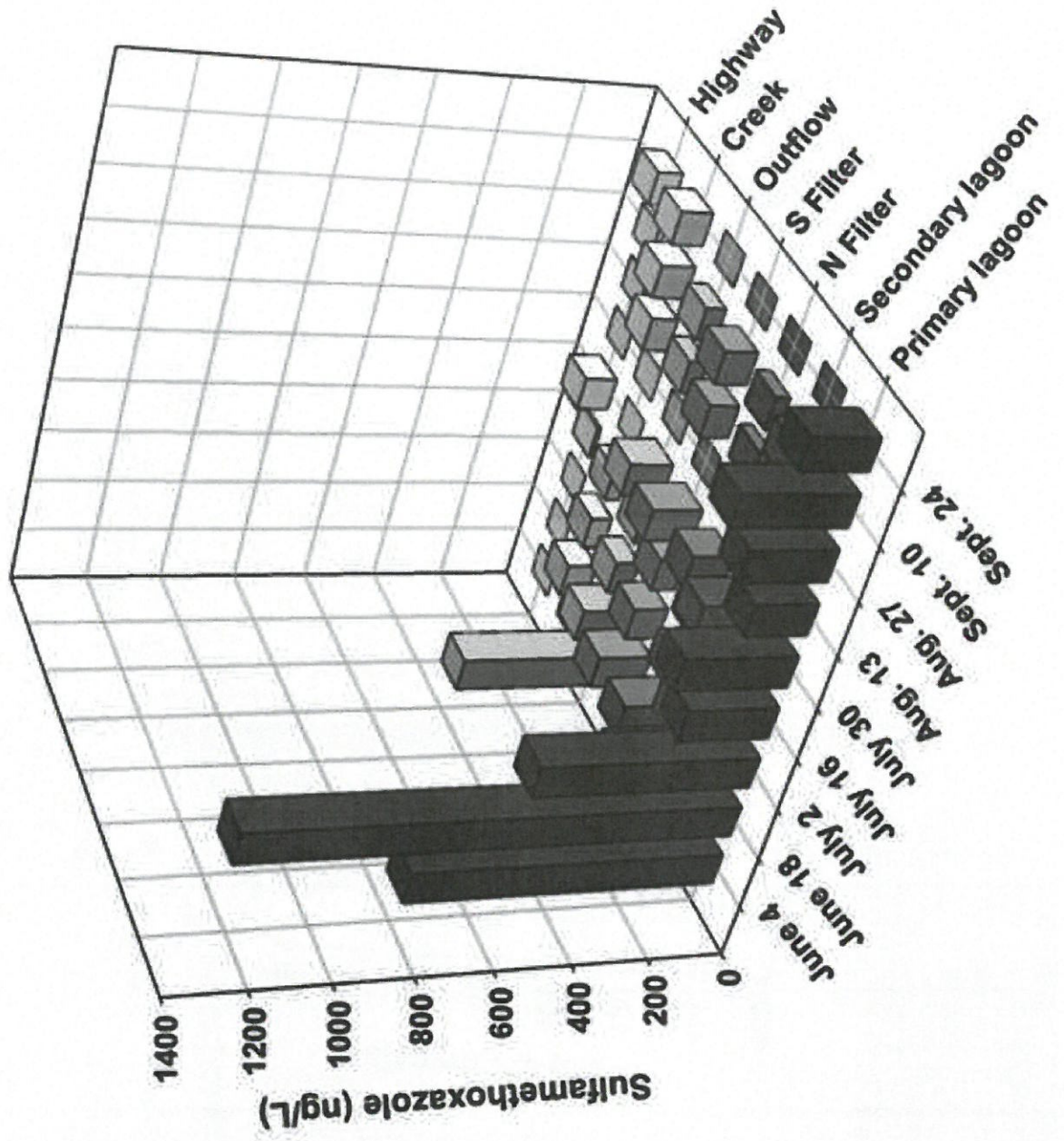




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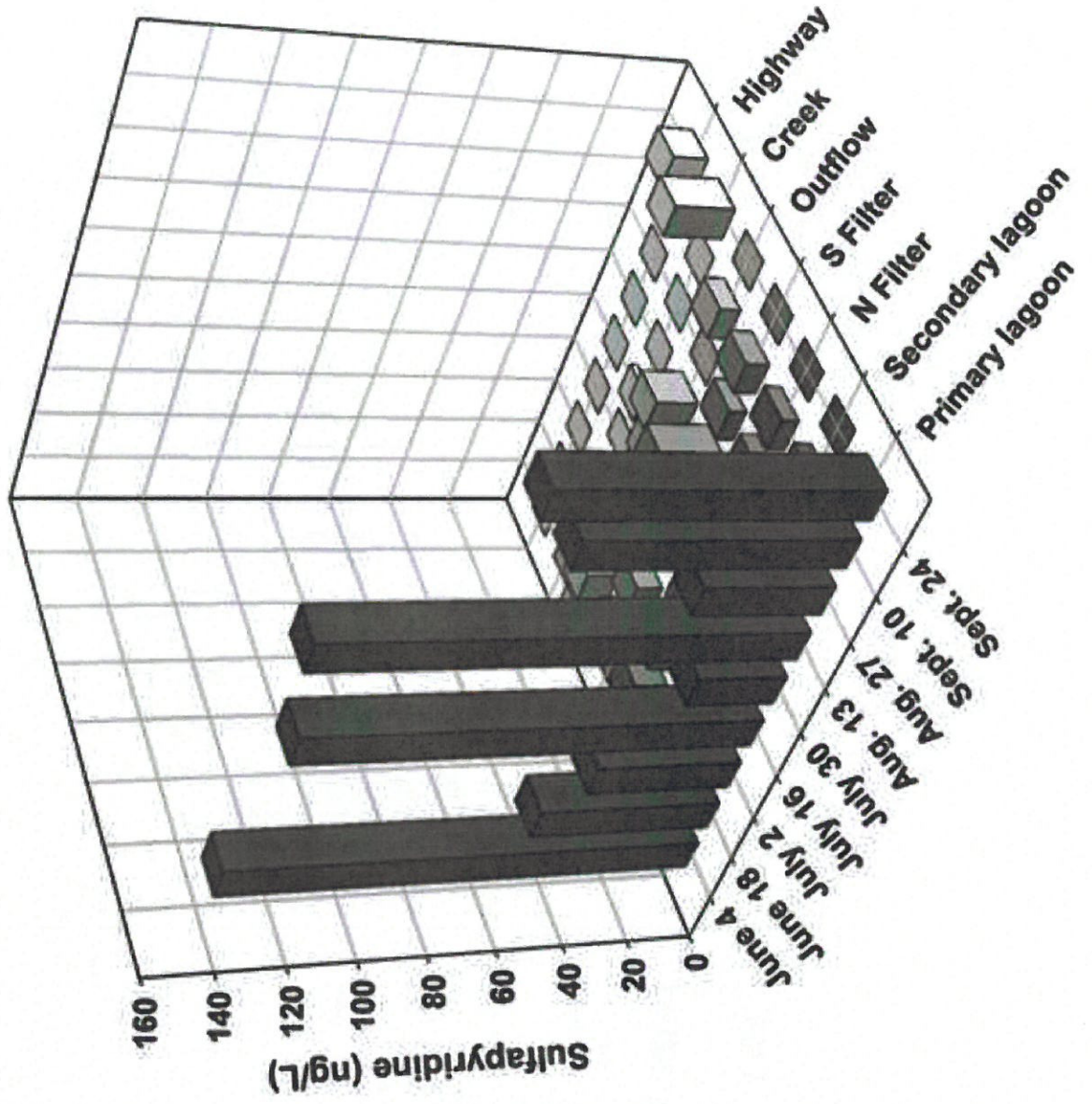
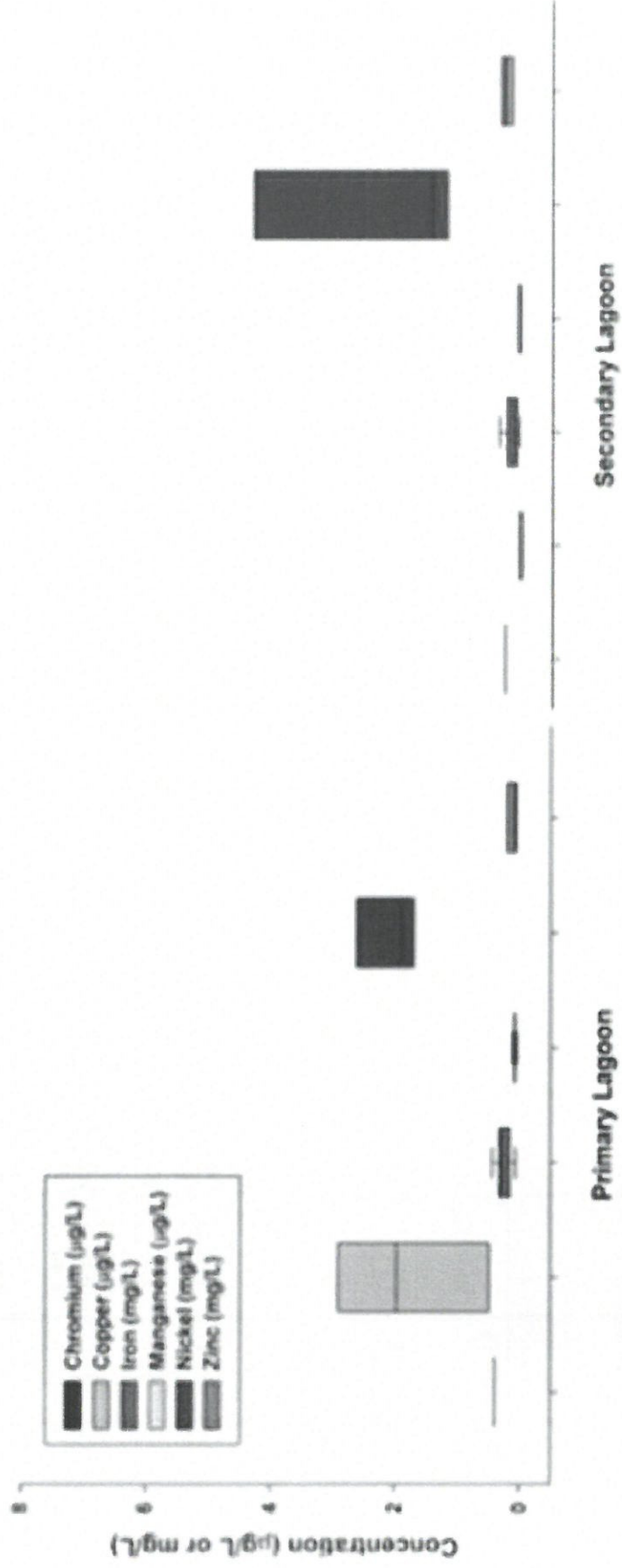


Figure 4  
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**Table 1**

Table 1. Levels of nutrients and other traditional wastewater contaminants in the secondary lagoon ("pre-filter" input water) and outflow of both subsurface filters ("post-filter" output water) of the passive filter at Dumnottar, Manitoba. BOD = biochemical oxygen demand, COD = chemical oxygen demand, TDS = Total dissolved solids, TKN = total Kjeldahl nitrogen; TSS = total suspended solids. Units are mg/L for all except coliforms (counts/L). Data from Dillon Consulting Ltd. (2014).

Parameters	June 18, 2013		July 2, 2013		July 16, 2013		July 30, 2013		August 13, 2013		August 27, 2013		% reduction pre- to post-filter	
	Pre-filter	Post-filter	Pre-filter	Post-filter	Pre-filter	Post-filter	Pre-filter	Post-filter	Pre-filter	Post-filter	Pre-filter	Post-filter	range	average
[mg/L] or counts/L	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	<0.35	N/A	N/A
NO <sub>2</sub> + NO <sub>3</sub>	2.54	2.36	4.43	2.62	0.171	1.04	12.0	0.489	14.3	0.420	2.23	1.05	-510-97	58
Ammonia	<6.0	<6.0	6.6	<6.0	<6.0	<6.0	12.9	<6.0	24.5	<6	7.0	<6.0	0-76	>25
BOD	121	46	113	44	135	52	88	49	163	52	115	50	44-68	59
COD	3.59	1.91	5.30	4.05	2.25	1.0	5.45	1.43	5.30	1.30	1.90	1.44	24-75	50
Total P	956	981	1070	1030	1040	1080	1130	984	1140	988	1110	1110	-3-13	4
TDS	5.82	4.72	8.20	5.04	3.03	2.93	16.6	2.27	21.7	2.40	5.52	2.97	3-89	47
TKN	8.0	6.0	25	6.0	18	12	22	<5.0	65	5.0	17	<5.0	25-92	62
TSS	8.44	7.40	8.30	7.44	9.52	7.34	8.37	8.20	8.73	8.68	9.04	7.61	0.6-23	11
pH	150	9	9	<3	230	23	430	4	4300	4	9300	43	67-99.9	92
Fecal Coliform	210	930	210	1500	750	4300	15000	430	110000	430	9300	2300	-614-99.6	
Total Coliform	210	930	210	1500	750	4300	15000	430	110000	430	9300	2300	-614-99.6	

Table 2

Table 2: Mean ( $\pm$ SE) abundances of antibiotic resistance genes (ARGs), nitrification, and denitrification genes within water and biofilm samples collected from the Dunnottar wastewater treatment and downstream areas in 2013.

Water <sup>a</sup>	16S-rRNA	Total <i>tet</i> <sup>R</sup>	Total <i>sul</i> <sup>R</sup>	<i>nirS</i> +K	<i>amoA</i>
Primary lagoon	19000 ( $\pm$ 4400)	4.1 ( $\pm$ 1.0)	151 ( $\pm$ 58)	422 ( $\pm$ 96)	15 ( $\pm$ 3)
Secondary lagoon	8540 ( $\pm$ 4050)	6.4 ( $\pm$ 2.2)	2.0 ( $\pm$ 0.4)	97 ( $\pm$ 18)	30 ( $\pm$ 12)
North filter	1070 ( $\pm$ 210)	3.0 ( $\pm$ 0.9)	2.3 ( $\pm$ 0.8)	233 ( $\pm$ 35)	62 ( $\pm$ 16)
South filter	1190 ( $\pm$ 580)	4.9 ( $\pm$ 1.6)	2.8 ( $\pm$ 1.3)	119 ( $\pm$ 22)	38 ( $\pm$ 12)
Outflow	2130 ( $\pm$ 1410)	2.6 ( $\pm$ 0.6)	2.1 ( $\pm$ 0.7)	87 ( $\pm$ 19)	31 ( $\pm$ 10)
Creek	1370 ( $\pm$ 430)	0.9 ( $\pm$ 0.2)	5.6 ( $\pm$ 3.2)	86 ( $\pm$ 23)	13 ( $\pm$ 2)
Highway	1020 ( $\pm$ 300)	1.0 ( $\pm$ 0.2)	4.6 ( $\pm$ 3.6)	87 ( $\pm$ 17)	19 ( $\pm$ 8)
Biofilm <sup>b</sup>	16S-rRNA	Total <i>tet</i> <sup>R</sup>	Total <i>sul</i> <sup>R</sup>	<i>nirS</i> +K	<i>amoA</i>
Secondary lagoon	6950 ( $\pm$ 3070)	51 ( $\pm$ 13)	31 ( $\pm$ 11)	2150 ( $\pm$ 370)	31 ( $\pm$ 11)
North filter	20500 ( $\pm$ 14900)	68 ( $\pm$ 23)	54 ( $\pm$ 22)	779 ( $\pm$ 266)	46 ( $\pm$ 17)
South filter	80800 ( $\pm$ 49300)	0.8 ( $\pm$ 0.4)	0.5 ( $\pm$ 0.4)	1820 ( $\pm$ 850)	11 ( $\pm$ 4)

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>3</sup> genes per mL

<sup>b</sup> 10<sup>3</sup> genes per cm<sup>2</sup>

Table 3

Table 3: *Vibrio fischeri* (Microtox<sup>®</sup> assay) bioluminescence presented as percent of control ( $\pm$ SD) after 15 minutes exposure to test water samples. *V. fischeri* bioluminescence values less than 75% of control are highlighted; values with ‘\*’ are the averaged bioluminescence values from the triplicate samples collected on that day as part of the rotating sampling schedule. While the pH of the samples ranged from 6-9, there was no observable impact on *V. fischeri* bioluminescence (data not shown). "-" indicates sample was lost due to breakage.

Water Sample Locations	04-Jun-13	18-Jun-13	02-Jul-13	16-Jul-13	30-Jul-13	13-Aug-13	27-Aug-13	10-Sep-13	24-Sep-13	Average
<b>Primary lagoon</b>	31 ( $\pm$ 1)	72 ( $\pm$ 2)	43 ( $\pm$ 1)	45 ( $\pm$ 1)	48 ( $\pm$ 3)	50 ( $\pm$ 1)	52 ( $\pm$ 2)*	48 ( $\pm$ 1)	62 ( $\pm$ 1)	50
<b>Secondary lagoon</b>	57 ( $\pm$ 1)	101( $\pm$ 13)*	115 ( $\pm$ 2)	-	114 ( $\pm$ 4)	69 ( $\pm$ 3)	95 ( $\pm$ 2)	97 ( $\pm$ 3)	-	94
<b>North filter</b>	-	106 ( $\pm$ 1)	108 ( $\pm$ 6)*	128 ( $\pm$ 4)	126 ( $\pm$ 4)	113 ( $\pm$ 4)	102 ( $\pm$ 7)	112 ( $\pm$ 1)	-	114
<b>South filter</b>	-	94 ( $\pm$ 1)	101 ( $\pm$ 2)	101 ( $\pm$ 3)*	119 ( $\pm$ 2)	100 ( $\pm$ 1)	102 ( $\pm$ 1)	81 $\pm$ (6)	-	100
<b>Outflow</b>	59 ( $\pm$ 1)	103 ( $\pm$ 2)	90 ( $\pm$ 2)	135 ( $\pm$ 7)	120 ( $\pm$ 2)*	106 ( $\pm$ 2)	120 ( $\pm$ 4)	113 ( $\pm$ 1)	-	106
<b>Creek</b>	44 ( $\pm$ 1)	51 ( $\pm$ 1)	62 ( $\pm$ 1)	39 ( $\pm$ 2)	54 ( $\pm$ 5)	14 ( $\pm$ 4)*	9 ( $\pm$ 1)	43 ( $\pm$ 2)	63 ( $\pm$ 3)	42
<b>Highway</b>	-	-	-	105 ( $\pm$ 4)	116 ( $\pm$ 5)	80 ( $\pm$ 1)	110 ( $\pm$ 4)	75 ( $\pm$ 6)*	114 ( $\pm$ 3)	100
<b>Lake Blank</b>	110 ( $\pm$ 2)	85 ( $\pm$ 2)	72 ( $\pm$ 1)	89 ( $\pm$ 2)	105 ( $\pm$ 2)	106 ( $\pm$ 4)	91 ( $\pm$ 3)	87 ( $\pm$ 2)	123 ( $\pm$ 4)	97
<b>Field Blank (milli-q)</b>	-	103 ( $\pm$ 1)	114 ( $\pm$ 1)	105 ( $\pm$ 5)	120 ( $\pm$ 4)	111 ( $\pm$ 1)	114 ( $\pm$ 2)	124 ( $\pm$ 2)	108 ( $\pm$ 6)	112

Table 4

Table 4: Comparison of concentrations of target pharmaceutical compounds in grab water samples from receiving waters of different Manitoban wastewater systems.

<b>Compound</b>	<b>Dunnottar</b>	<b>Grand Marais</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>Winkler/Morden</b> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Carbamazepine</b>	44-256 ng/L	85-500 ng/L	1-85 ng/L
<b>Gemfibrozil</b>	ND-107 ng/L	ND-15 ng/L	ND
<b>Metoprolol</b>	ND-26.7 ng/L	ND	ND-19 ng/L
<b>Sulfamethoxazole</b>	ND-403 ng/L	ND-21 ng/L	ND-70 ng/L

ND = not detected

<sup>1</sup>Anderson et al. (2013); <sup>2</sup>Carlson et al. (2013)

**Supplementary Material**

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