

MJPhD

MICROPLASTICS: *WHAT ARE THEY AND WHERE ARE THEY*

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3 October 2026



WE OFFER 3 KINDS OF SERVICES

GOOD · CHEAP · FAST

BUT YOU CAN PICK ONLY TWO

GOOD & CHEAP WON'T BE FAST

FAST & GOOD WON'T BE CHEAP

CHEAP & FAST WON'T BE GOOD.

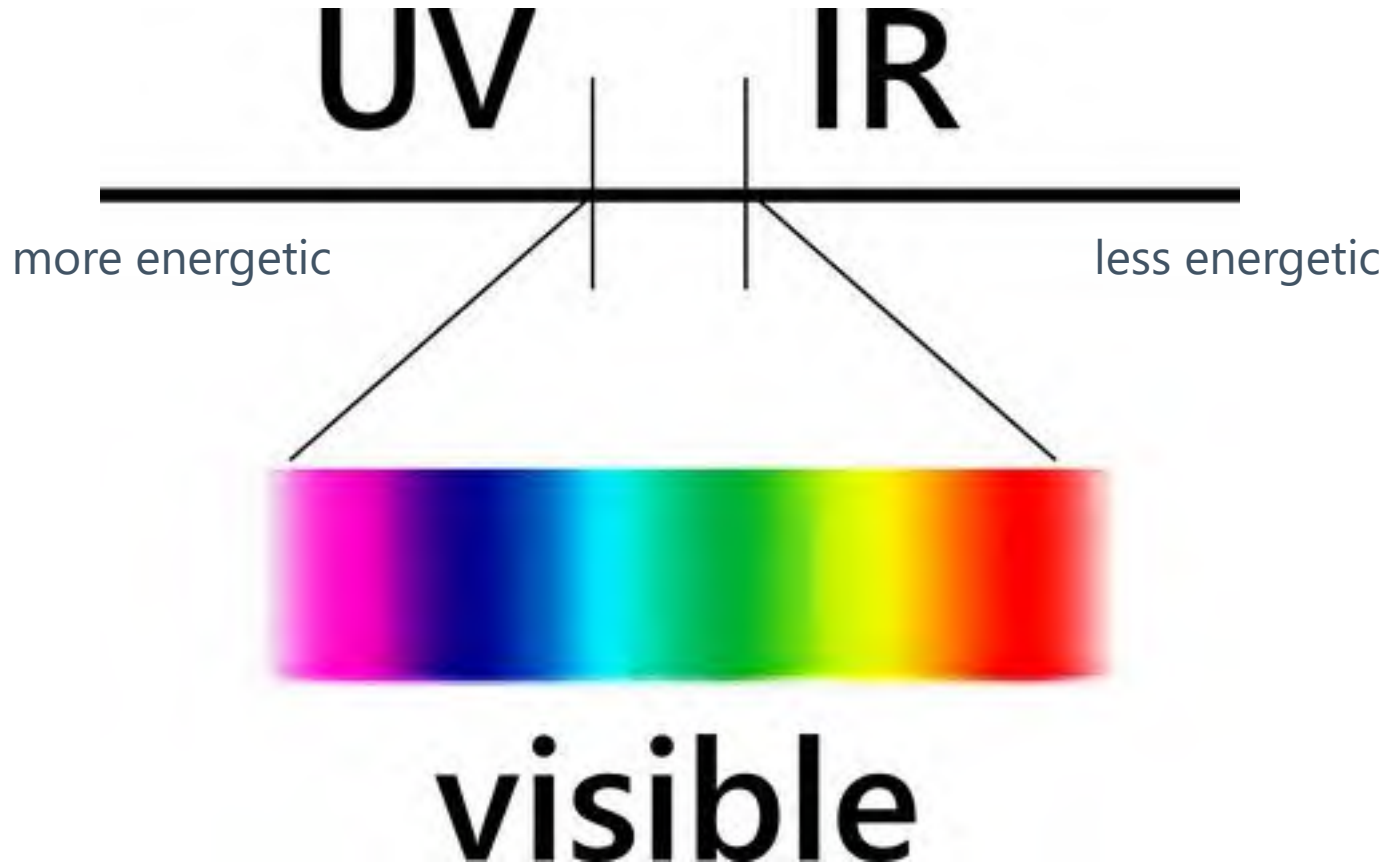
These are syenite, likely from near Marathon, ON.
They contain sodalite with some sulfide content.
Transported by glaciers, I find them in Michigan,
at night.



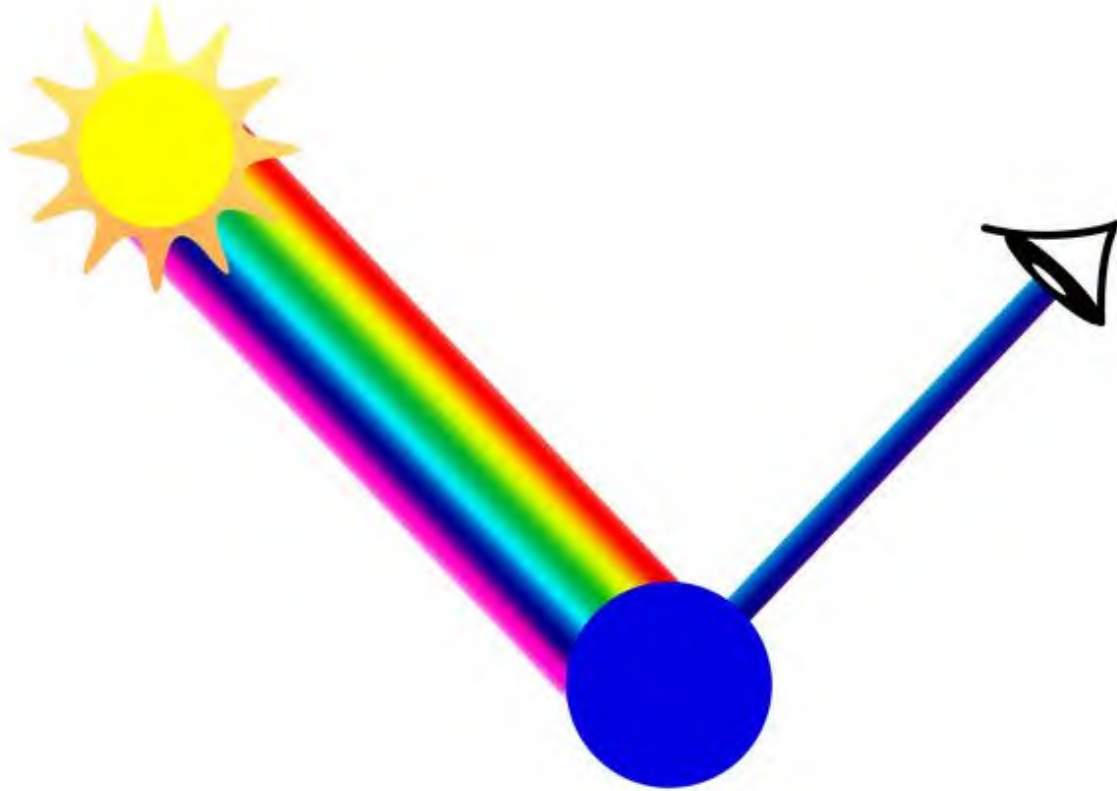
visible light



UV light
(365 nm filtered)



NORMAL VISION AND COLORS



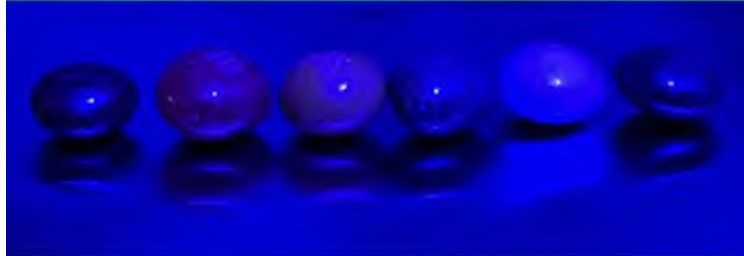
red light



green light



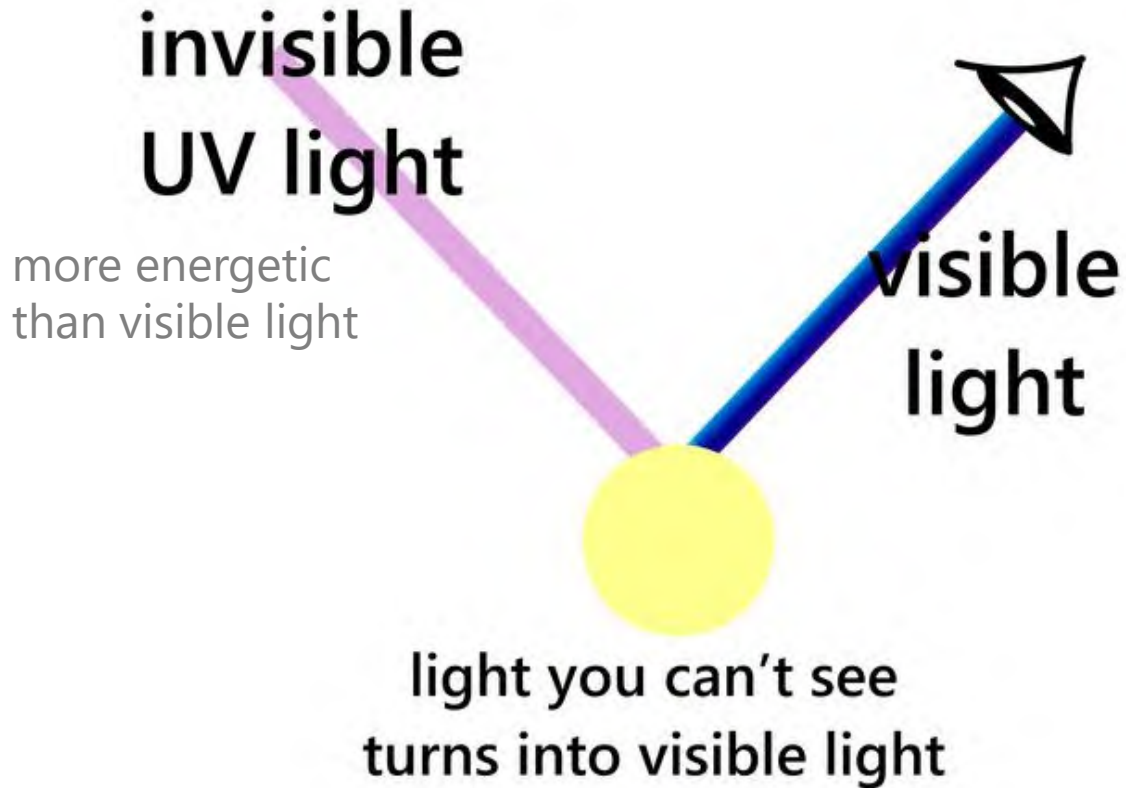
blue light



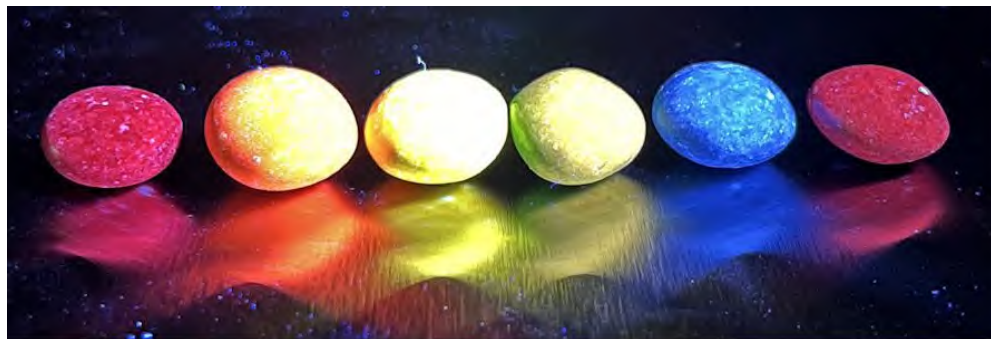
white light



FLUORESCENCE



UV



white light

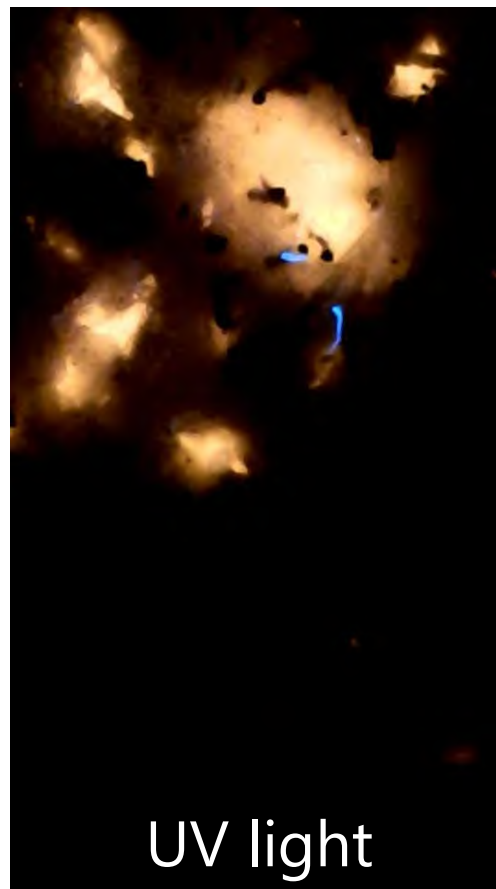


The filter is important. It gets rid of stray visible light making fluorescence much easier to see.





visible light



UV light

OBX BEACH SAND



OBX BEACH SAND

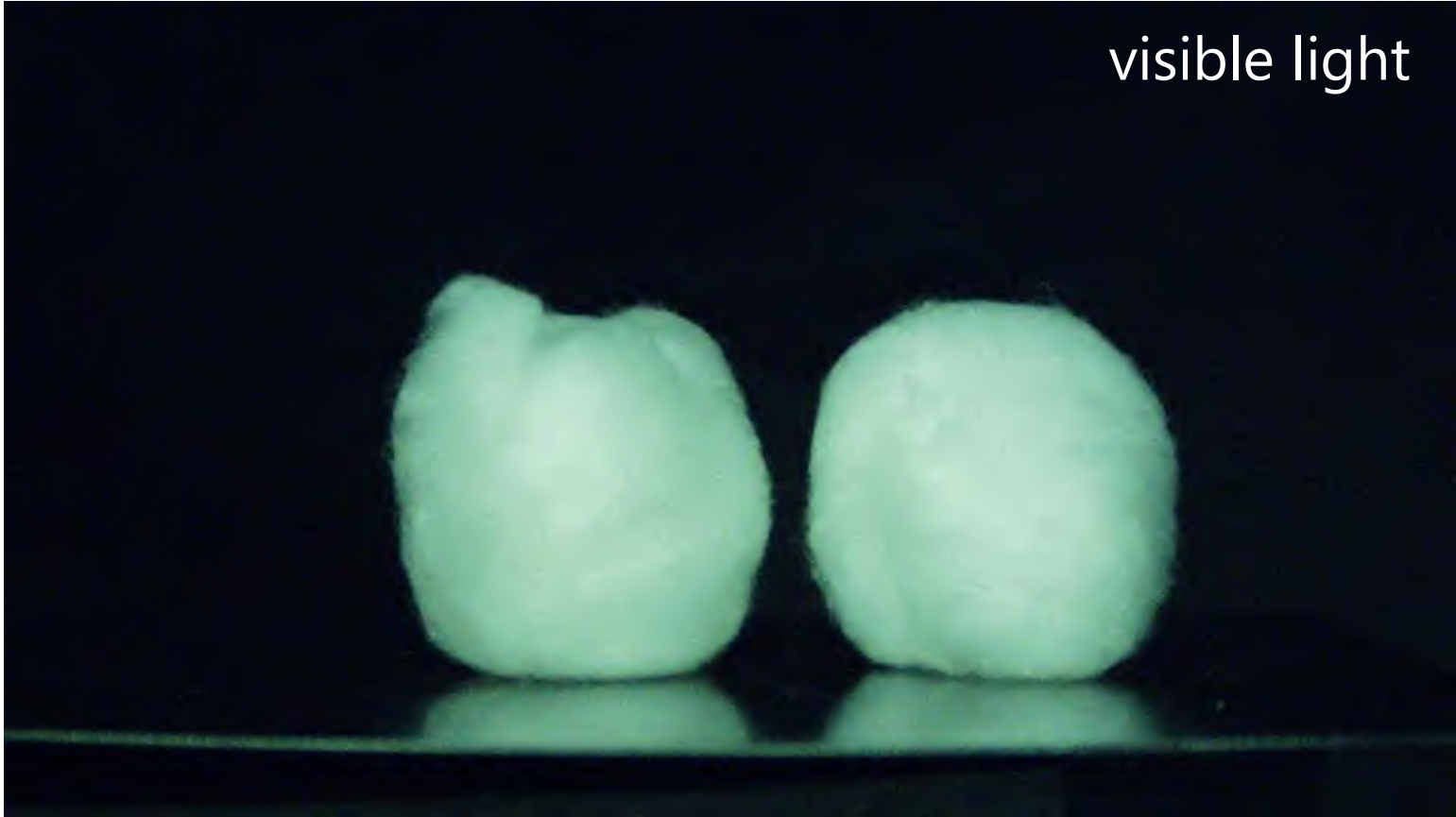


OBX BEACH SAND

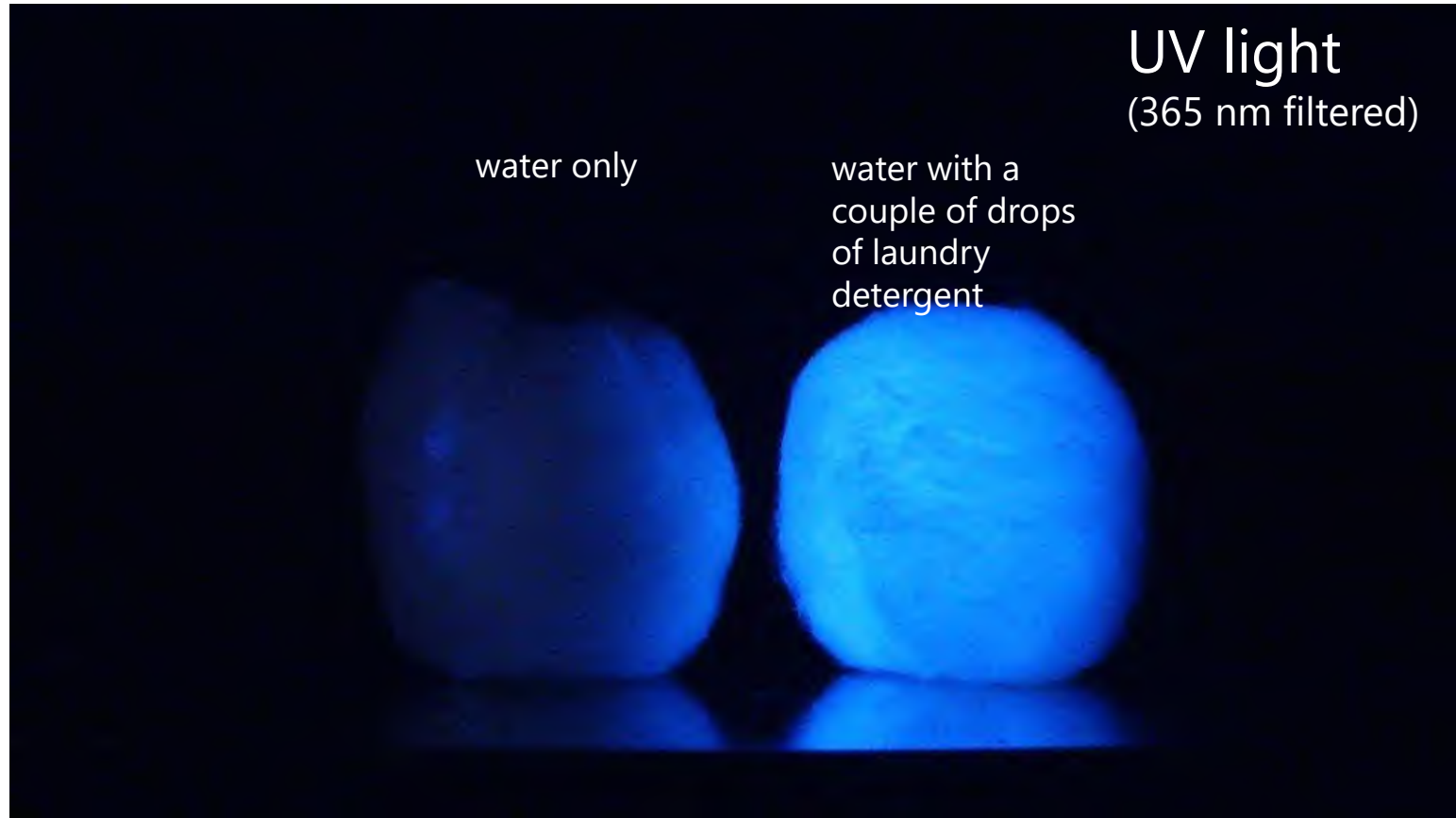


COTTON BALLS

visible light

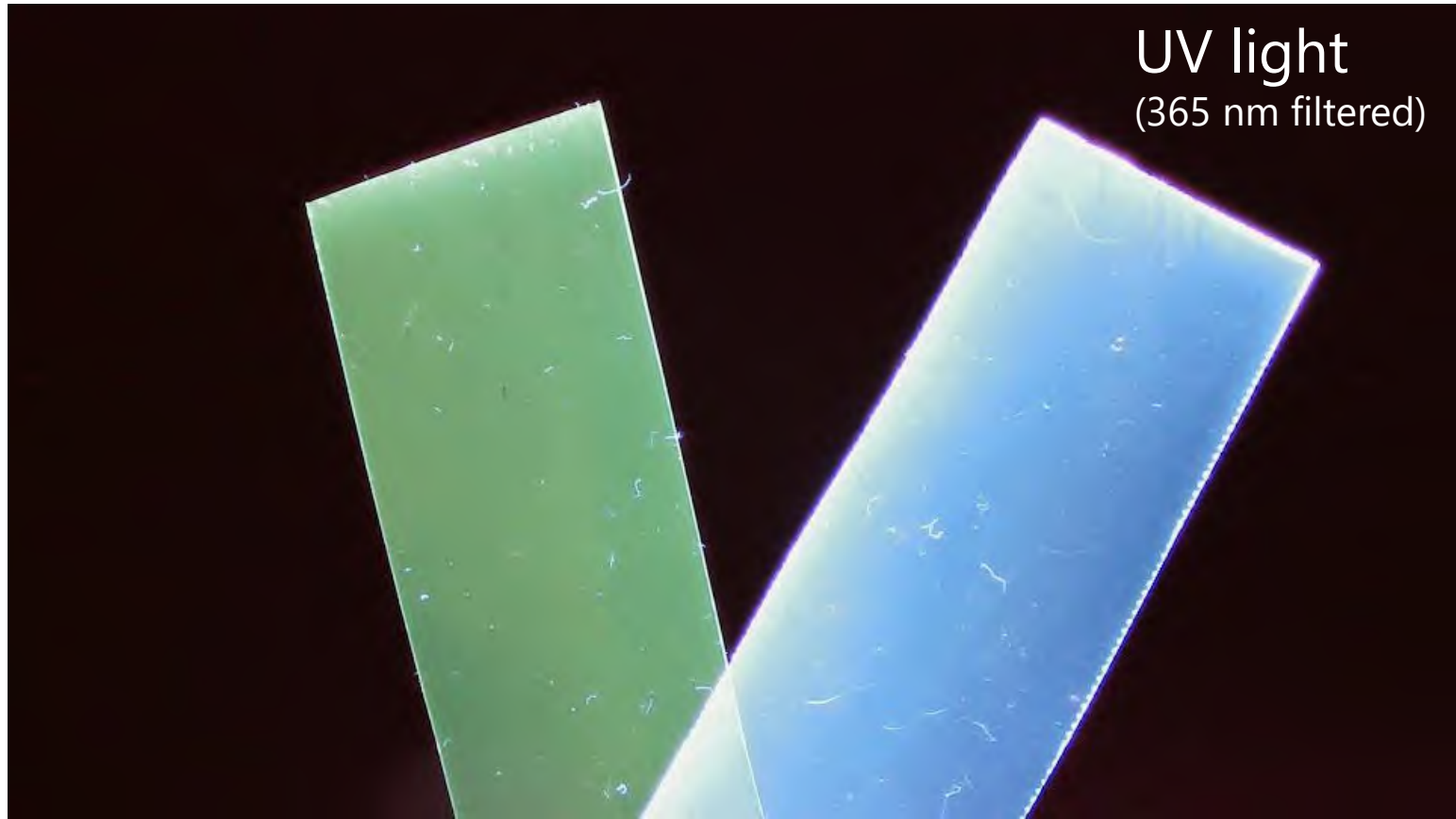


COTTON BALLS – OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS





PET – OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS







UV light
filter



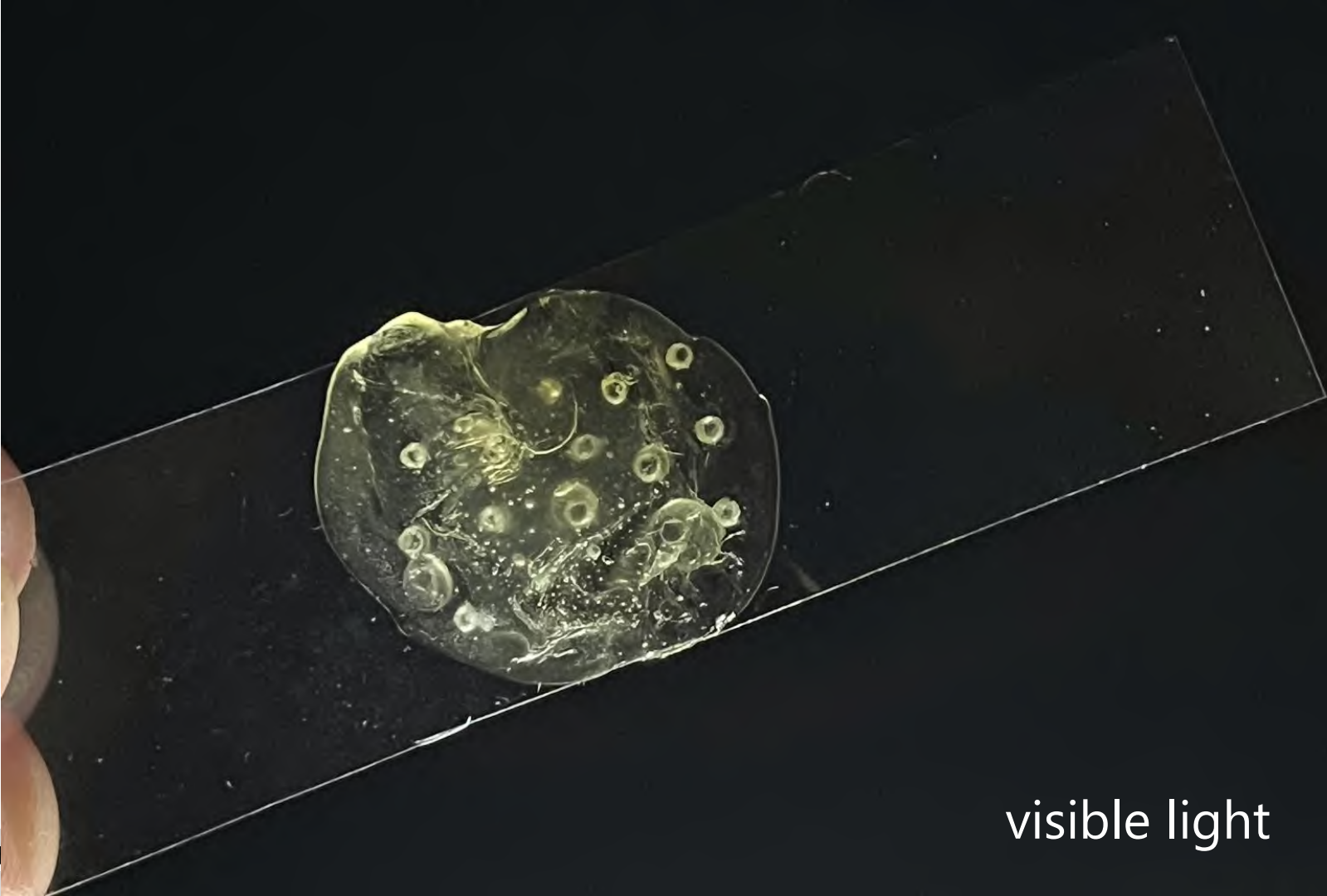
Midland Local Section



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Water Chemistry in the Great Lakes Region

<https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/college-science-engineering/centers/cmu-biological-station/h2o-q-in-the-classroom>



visible light





Get a sample of water.

Filter out the small particles.

Count the particles.



current
iteration
designed to
sample near
but not at
the surface

<https://mjphd.net/sc/sc.php?007>

water sampling

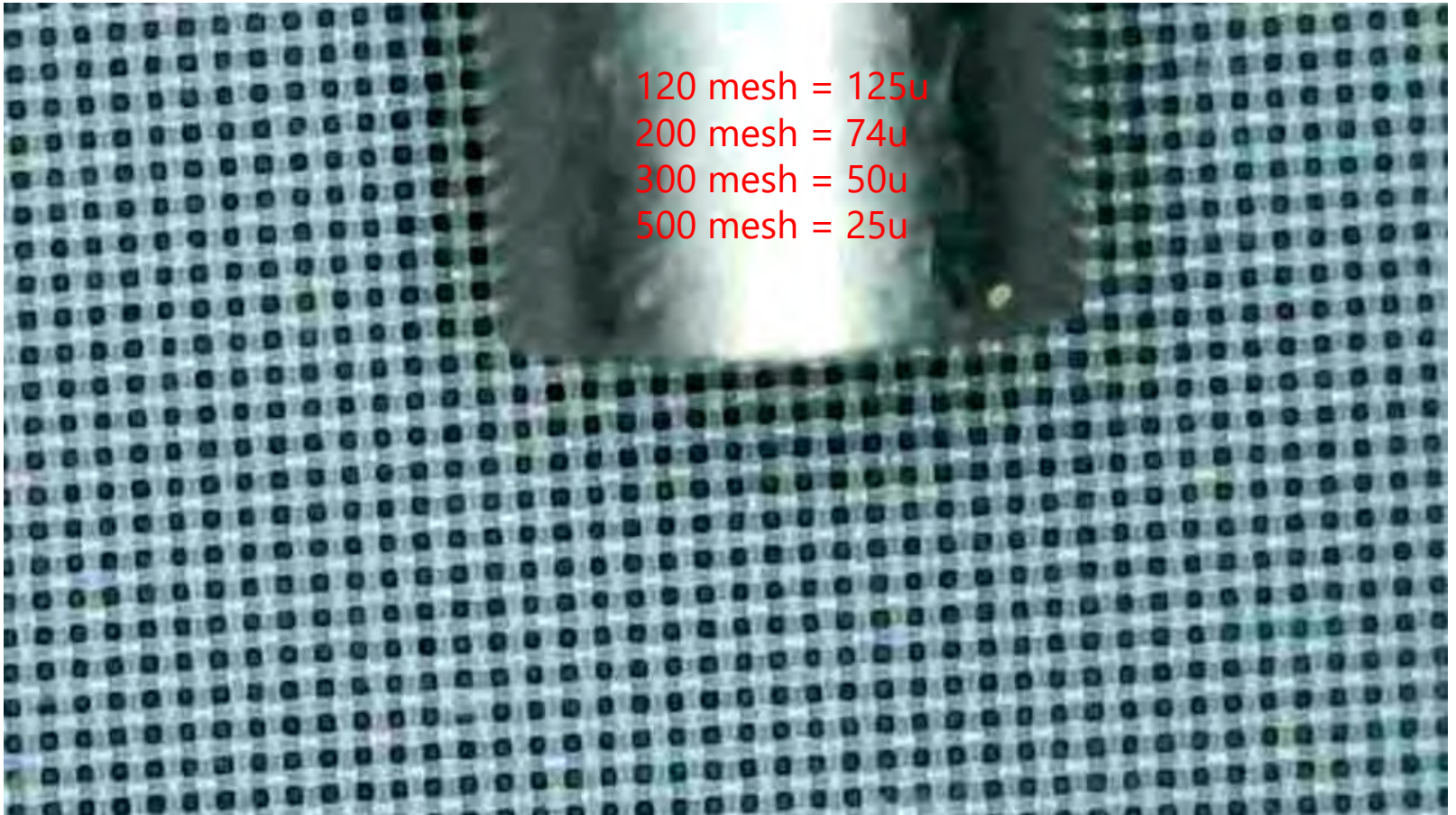
SAMPLING OUSEL FALLS, MT

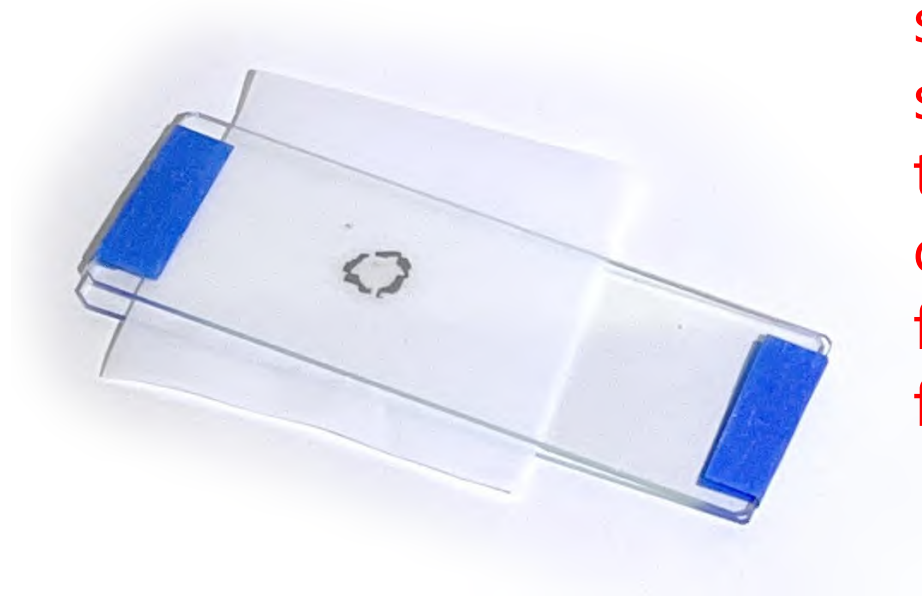


various
options for
filters
explored



SILK SCREEN FABRIC AS FILTERS





slide
sandwich
showing
traced
outline of
funnel on
filter media

PORTABLE/RAPID SETUP



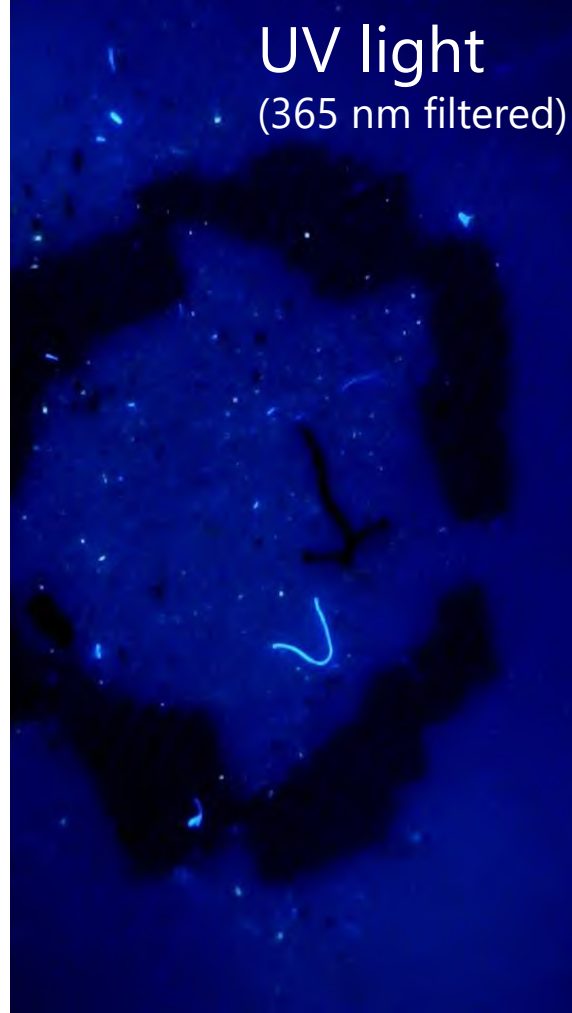
SAMPLING STEPS

- Use masking tape to make microscope slide sandwich leaving one side open
- Open slide sandwich
- Rinse funnel with sample
- Dry tip
- Pull filter mesh around tip
- Push retainer over fabric snugly
- Pass 500 mL of water through funnel
- If filtering slows or doesn't flow, use syringe to pressurize
- Carefully remove retainer
- Touch to coffee filter to dry
- Put in on slide and close the sandwich
- Outline funnel tip on top slide with marker

visible light



UV light
(365 nm filtered)

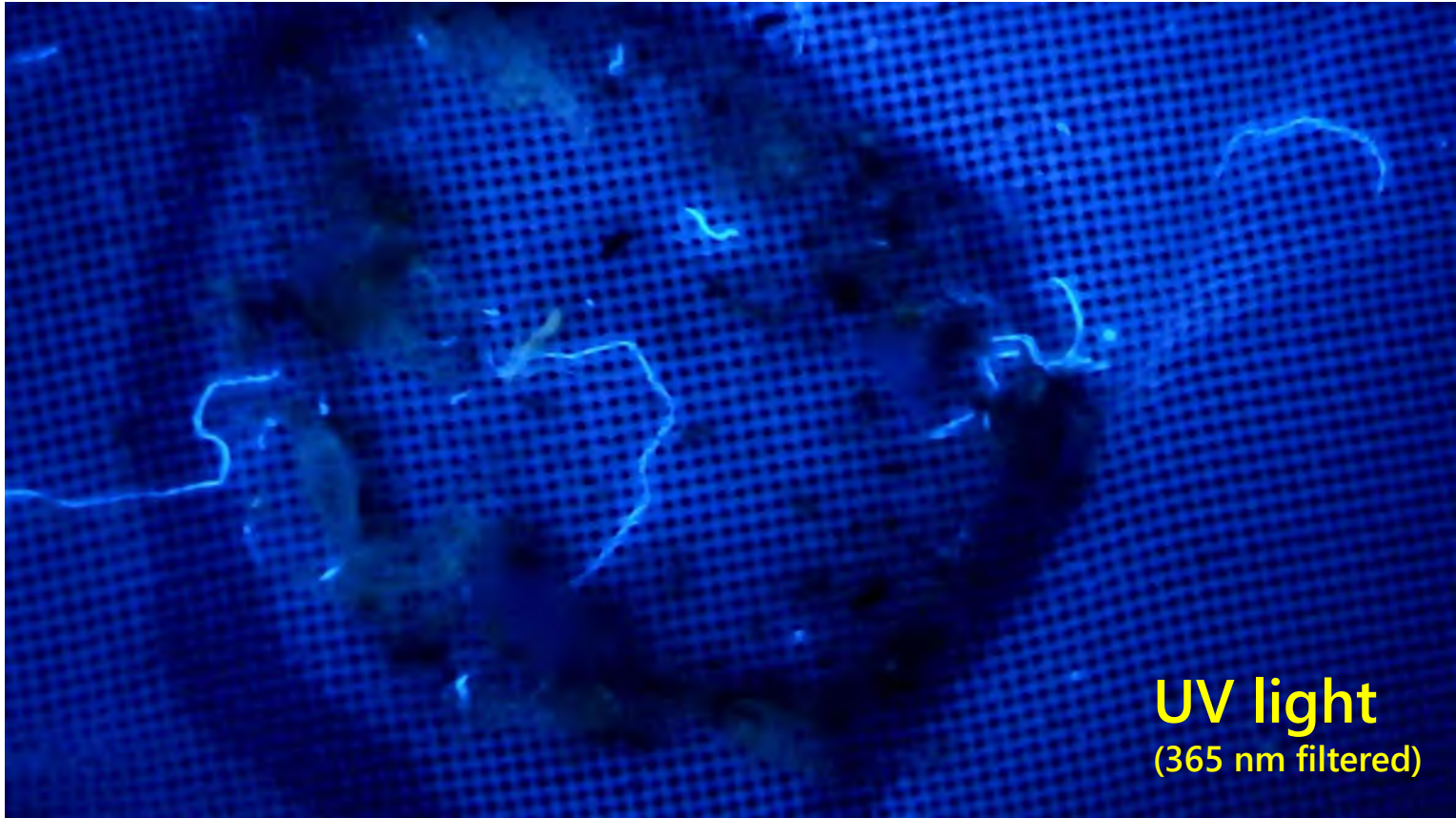


OBX OCEAN WATER



Visible

ble



UV light
(365 nm filtered)

OBX OCEAN WATER

ght
(filtered)



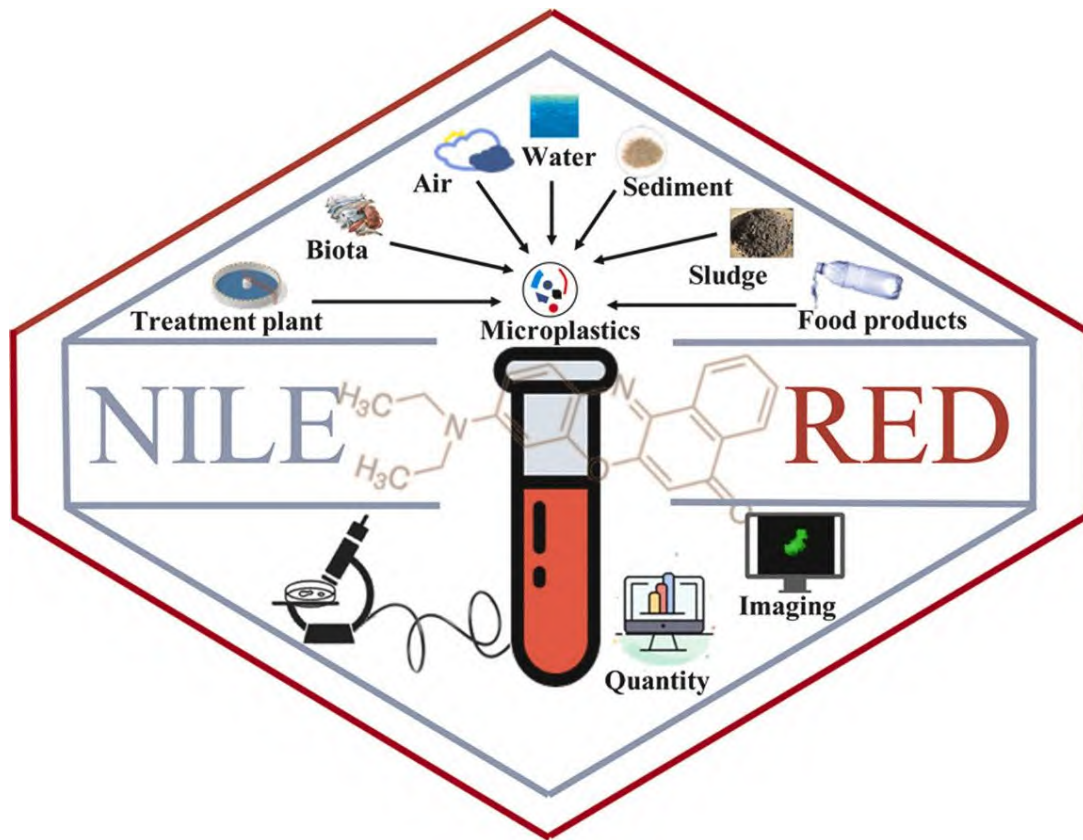
Overlay

Ousel Falls, MT
8/26/2026

During presentation on 16 July, this was a live demo.



WHAT I AM NOT DOING



Shruti, V. C., et al. "Analyzing microplastics with Nile Red: Emerging trends, challenges, and prospects." *Journal of hazardous materials* 423 (2022): 127171.



Ho, Derek, and Julie Masura. "Dyeing to know: harmonizing nile red staining protocols for microplastic identification." *Colorants* 4.2 (2025): 20.

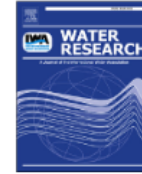
<https://plasticfreepals.org/About/>



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Water Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/watres



Review

Microplastics in freshwaters and drinking water: Critical review and assessment of data quality



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high quality data is difficult!

ARTICLE INFO

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Waste water

Surface water

Human health

ABSTRACT

Microplastics have recently been detected in drinking water as well as in drinking water sources. This presence has triggered discussions on possible implications for human health. However, there have been questions regarding the quality of these occurrence studies since there are no standard sampling, extraction and identification methods for microplastics. Accordingly, we assessed the quality of fifty studies researching microplastics in drinking water and in its major freshwater sources. This includes an assessment of microplastic occurrence data from river and lake water, groundwater, tap water and bottled drinking water. Studies of occurrence in wastewater were also reviewed. We review and propose best practices to sample, extract and detect microplastics and provide a quantitative quality assessment of studies reporting microplastic concentrations. Further, we summarize the findings related to microplastic concentrations, polymer types and particle shapes. Microplastics are frequently present in freshwaters and drinking water, and number concentrations spanned ten orders of magnitude (1×10^{-2} to $10^8 \text{ \#}/\text{m}^3$) across individual samples and water types. However, only four out of 50 studies received positive scores for all assessed quality criteria, implying there is a significant need to improve quality.

OBSERVATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS



- Observations:
 - it is impossible to find water free of particles
 - water with the same lot numbers and in the same cases/packages contain different amounts of plastic particles
 - bottles on the outside of cases/packages can, but don't always, contain more particles than those in the center of the case/package
 - there are particles produced from processing equipment present
- Hypothesis: impacts and flexing of polymer containers creates microplastic particles

WATER BOTTLE ABUSE



- half-filled commercial water bottle
- drop from approx. 2 feet 1500, 3000 or 4500 times
- use 66 cm diameter, cylindrical, baffled tumbler operating at 50 revolutions per minute
- half-filled to allow more distortion, to overcome centripetal force and to limit equipment damage

WATER BOTTLE ABUSE



- set on air dry (no heat)
- operate for 30 minutes for one or two cycles

ABUSE OPTIONS



ABUSE OPTIONS



- moved to 50 ml per container
- either never completely empty bottle or minimum triple rinse
- 50 mL filled and saved as blank

During presentation on 3 October, this was a live demo, not a video.

PET Water Bottles

August 2025

<https://mjphd.net/sc/sc.php?010>

SAMPLING STEPS

- Triple rinse 2 vials with bottled water; one will be for the blank, one for sample
 - use piece of polyethylene between the bottle and cap
- Save a sample of “before”
- With between 50 and 100 mL in the bottle, seal it and begin beating it up for 10 to 15 minutes
 - never fully open the bottle but you can loosen and retighten the lid
- After the time is up, save a sample in one of the prewashed vials
- Observe particles over bright light

LABS

Environmental

- Use masking tape to make microscope slide sandwich leaving one side open
- Open slide sandwich
- Rinse funnel with sample
- Dry tip
- Pull filter mesh around tip
- Push retainer over fabric snugly
- Pass 500 mL of water through funnel
- If filtering slows or doesn't flow, use syringe to pressurize
- Carefully remove retainer
- Place on filter paper to dry
- Put in on slide and close the sandwich
- Outline funnel tip on top slide with marker
- Observe under white and UV light

Bottled Water

- Triple rinse 2 vials with bottled water; one will be for the blank, one for sample
 - use piece of polyethylene between the bottle and cap
- Save a sample of "before"
- With between 50 and 100 mL in the bottle, seal it and begin beating it up for 10 to 15 minutes
 - never fully open the bottle but you can loosen and retighten the lid
- After the time is up, save a sample in one of the prewashed vials
- Observe particles over bright light



Yooperlites and that using different light to view the world can illuminate new things

Microplastics are everywhere and in the news every day, yet there is a lot of misinformation

How to construct equipment to look for microplastics

MIDLAND ACS LOCAL SECTION



**Water Chemistry in the
Great Lakes Region**



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It took
you up to
1 WEEK
to eat this
credit card



wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?348337/Revealed-plastic-ingestion-by-people-could-be-equating-to-a-credit-card-a-week

Cutting Boards: An Overlooked Source of Microplastics in Human Food?

Himani Yadav, Md Rakib Hasan Khan, Mohiuddin Quadir, Kelly A. Rusch, Partho Pritom Mondal, Megan Orr, Elvis Genbo Xu, and Syeed Md Iskander*

Cite This: *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2023, 57, 8225–8235

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ACCESS |

Metrics & More

Article Recommendations

Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Plastic cutting boards are a potentially significant source of microplastics in human food. Thus, we investigated the impact of chopping styles and board materials on microplastics released during chopping. As chopping progressed, the effects of chopping styles on microplastic release became evident. The mass and number of microplastics released from polypropylene chopping boards were greater than polyethylene by 5–60% and 14–71%, respectively. Chopping on polyethylene boards was associated with a greater release of microplastics with a vegetable (i.e., carrots) than chopping without carrots. Microplastics showed a broad, bottom-skewed normal distribution, dominated by <100 μm spherical-shaped microplastics. Based on our assumptions, we estimated a per-person annual exposure of 7.4–50.7 g of microplastics from a polyethylene chopping board and 49.5 g of microplastics from a polypropylene chopping board. We further estimated that a person could be exposed to 14.5 to 71.9 million polyethylene microplastics annually, compared to 79.4 million polypropylene microplastics from chopping boards. The preliminary toxicity study of the polyethylene microplastics did not show adverse effects on the viability of mouse fibroblast cells for 72 h. This study identifies plastic chopping boards as a substantial source of microplastics in human food, which requires careful attention.

KEYWORDS: polyethylene, polypropylene, human exposure, FTIR, toxicity



cumulative annual release of 7.4–50.7 g of polyethylene. . . . from a polypropylene chopping board was 49.5 g



Making meals without microplastics: Tips for safer cutting boards



assuming 1 use per day,
that's 0.14 g per use

50 grams per year
– roughly equivalent
to the weight of ten
plastic credit cards

