

Dina Hovde

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I never knew what TMDL meant before this week, but now I realize how important it is.

We need Vancouver lake on a priority list for a water improvement plan. It's not being prioritized right now, and The Columbian has it right: "Milfoil, an invasive aquatic weed, threatens to choke the lake in a tangle of thick vegetation." Blue algae also makes our shallow lake problematic, halting many activities that bring tourism dollars and quality of life to the area.

Losing access to this water body would be a detriment to the community and state. There are already enough reasons people leave Vancouver and cross the Interstate 5 Bridge into Portland for outings and work. Keeping people and their money on our side of the river makes good sense. From real estate to restaurant dining activity, Vancouver Lake is a benefit to Southwest Washington. The environmental import of the lake is easy to see: The lake is a critical component of the entire lower Columbia River region. Vancouver Lake supports thousands of migratory waterfowl and salmonids.

In addition to the environmental and economic concerns of losing good use of the lake, the water body allows beauty minutes from Vancouver homes and athletic and recreational opportunities. Those range from swimming, fishing, rowing, sailing and paddling to free playtime for young families, low-income individuals and field trips for our public schools.

This lake is a big part of the quality of life in Vancouver for many citizens. Please prioritize it in your TMDL process.

Onward,

Dina Elizabeth Hovde