

# Jeff Campbell

Vancouver Lake needs your highest priority for water improvement. My business runs regattas. The 2019 Regional Dragon Boat Championship was set to run at Vancouver Lake July 31 to August 2nd. This event brought in thousands of participants and supporters from all over the Western USA. Vancouver Lake Park is the ideal location for regattas and has the potential to be the premier regatta course on the West Coast. Unfortunately we were forced to move the event at the last minute because of water quality issues at the lake. Thousands of water sports athletes now have a very unfavorable view of the lake. It is very unlikely that we will be able to host any dragon boat races at the lake until the water quality issue is mitigated. The financial impact of this is tremendous.

I have been involved in dragon boat racing at Vancouver Lake for over 20 years. The water quality was poor in 1998 and has significantly degraded ever since. Fish would jump into our boats 20 years ago. Now we see dead fish floating in the lake. Even 20 years ago the lake was posted frequently for cyanotoxins, but in the last 10 years the number of lake warnings and closures has skyrocketed. Athletes in water sports are extremely susceptible to pollution because of the close contact and water spray that occurs. Water is ingested and gets into the eyes. This has caused illnesses in athletes. Even when the lake is posted with warnings or closed I see small children in the water during the summer.

The lake is home to many species of wildlife. The number and variety of animals and birds has reduced because the lake is filling in and the food chain is interrupted. Areas of the lake where a shallow draft dragon boat (they draw about 2 feet) was able to go have been reduced by at least half in 20 years. The water in the lake is stagnant. There is little to no flow from the Columbia in the summer and fall. The lack of flow is killing the lake. On top of all of the water quality issues the lake is now infested with Milfoil. That alone will kill the lake.

My company relies on the ability for people to participate in paddling activities. The number of flat water sources for paddling in the area are limited. In SW Washington Vancouver Lake is the only suitable body of water.

The situation at Vancouver Lake is dire and I don't use that term lightly. If something is not done we will lose the lake and the wildlife that rely on it's health.

Please put Vancouver Lake as your highest priority for improvement project.