

Jeff Finley

Alan Stewart's input makes the case better than I can, but I agree with his entire input. I would add the following:

I live on Lakeshore Ave. and my home overlooks the lake. I retired in 2015 and in 2016 decided to get involved with the Vancouver Lake Rowing Club. I also became interested in trying to understand the issues that plagued this invaluable resource and why over time and study no direct action had been taken to address this threatened regional resource. After several months of research and discussions with various official personnel at various city, county, state and commercial organizations who a citizen might reasonably expect to have ownership or interest in the lake I was disappointed to find out that not one entity claimed responsibility or was willing to grab ahold of the issues and studies that had already been completed to find solutions for the lake. The most surprising fact I discovered was there was no consensus regarding "ownership" of the lake. Some claimed they owned the lake bottom; some said they owned the flushing channel; some said they owned the water from such and such high and low water marks, etc. As I was doing my research a common refrain from contacts at agencies that should have significant responsibility and interest in the issues basically told me, "great to see a citizens interest. Please keep me informed of your progress!" As it developed my interest began to focus on the milfoil problem. My research indicated that more than just a rapidly spreading invasive species that is impossible to eradicate, it is also a significant hazard to those who recreate on the lake. Apparently there are deaths each year attributed to the weed with people becoming trapped in the mass and drowning throughout Washington. I did however discover that there are treatments for the milfoil that when properly and repeatedly applied can control the spread of the weed. In fact, there are proven techniques and products that can in fact do that job. Additionally it was discovered that the state has a template based on experiences in other location that is directly applicable to our lakes situation. The "how to" instructions with experienced contacts is available within state regulation and codes. To address the problem of too many fingers in the lake ownership pie but no responsibility, there is also a state directive on how to establish a Lake Management District which brings together various organization under a charter that spells out ownership, responsibility and funding mechanisms and provides examples of proven experiences of other locations where this has been successfully implemented.

At this point as I understand it, milfoil has been identified as the most threatening issue facing the lake; funds have been accumulated and application has been made and approved for the first application of milfoil abatement treatment, but that treatment has not taken place. Without treatment as soon as possible, and a mechanism and organization put in place to provide continuous oversight and management of Lake Vancouver all of the potential benefits of this great resource will be lost. Treatment of the lake next year is critical but if it isn't followed up by structural reorganization, identification of responsible parties and an ongoing funding source it will be impossible for "concerned citizens" to carry the day indefinitely to protect and maintain this lake.

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