

Vancouver Lake Rowing Club Stewart

- Severity of the pollution problem – since 2004, Vancouver Lake has been designated an impaired water body in need of clean up and yet no water improvement project exists. The Lake falls is impaired for temperature, PCBs, turbidity, bacteria in the water, total phosphorous, Dieldrin and other toxins. Conjoined bodies of water like Lake River, Burnt Bridge Creek, and Salmon Creek all add to the Lake's level of impairment.
- Risks to public health – every season the Lake and this community miss out on the opportunity to bring thousands of visitors to the largest lake within a 50-mile radius of a major West Coast city and international airport (Portland) as hosts for world, national, west coast, regional, and state competitive rowing competitions because of closures due to blue-green algae. The same conditions affect swim beaches and recreational uses such as kayaking, sailing and paddle boarding. Risks to health from cyanobacteria are well established.
- Risks to threatened and endangered species – the Lake is a refuge for migratory waterfowl and has identified salmonids including chum, chinook and steelhead as part of the fish population.
- Vulnerability of water bodies to degradation - As temperature, toxicity, flow and dilution issues remain unaddressed, the Lake faces a new foe – Eurasian Milfoil Weed taking hold throughout the shallow waters threatening swimmers and recreation. Failure to address increased flow of colder Columbia River water through the existing Flushing Channel remains a key disappointment and issue.
- Local support and interest in a watershed - For more than 40 years, the Vancouver and Clark County communities have understood the enormous possibilities that Vancouver Lake represents for outdoor recreation, economic development and the important personal well-being that results from time spent recreating with families and friends in the beautiful outdoors. Vancouver Lake Regional Park represents a major local source for recreational shoreline opportunities that remains accessible to those with limited resources or using public transportation. There is recent renewed interest in taking advantage of the lake's potential for public access and use. Clark County has been acquiring land along the shore through its Legacy Land program and started to build a series of trails looping around the lake as part of the Lewis & Clark Regional Trail project (proposed alignment attached). This is a major investment with the belief that Vancouver Lake and the surrounding watersheds can be a major attraction for public use.

The attached pictures are of the annual US Rowing Northwest District high school rowing championships on Vancouver Lake in mid May. This event has close to 2000 athletes competing and brings easily another two to three thousand accompanying family members to the local community / economy. The US Rowing Northwest Masters district championship is also held on Vancouver Lake one month later in June with approximately 1200 athletes competing from all over the country. This regatta came very close to losing its permit due to water quality issues on Vancouver Lake. This would have been a big economic loss to the city of Vancouver initially and no doubt in the future as we cannot guarantee good water quality any longer. Additionally, 2 large dragon boat races had to be cancelled this year due to water quality. One being a fund raiser for our local vets, which despite being cancelled, still raised over \$22,000 doing alternative dry land events at Vancouver Lake Park.





