

Trisha Patterson

To whom it may concern,

I grew up in Camas, WA, along many bodies of water. I swam in Lacamas Lake when the water was high enough, made sandcastles on the banks of the Columbia before the summer algal blooms, and learned to row on Vancouver Lake, despite frequent and severe e. Coli outbreaks and algal blooms.

Each of these bodies of water deserve protecting, and Vancouver Lake in particular should be prioritized for the next round of cleanups by the State of Washington. The lake is a popular biking area, hosts a rowing and sailing club, and is the site of several rowing championships each year. I ran my first half marathon when I was 17 at Vancouver Lake. I learned to row on the lake, which led to a successful collegiate career rowing at Western. The lake is a focal point of the Vancouver community and should be restored. The lake is severely polluted, whether by point-sources or non-point sources, and we must take action to clean it up and restore it for future generations. It has been this way for years, but that doesn't mean we can't do something about it now.

The pollution on the lake isn't just a risk to community health, but also to wildlife. The blue herons that walk precariously across the shallow water know nothing of the damages that milfoil, an invasive species choking Vancouver lake, is wreaking, nor of the causes of it. Vancouver lake has been undergoing a slow death by eutrophication, which has serious implications on fish, frog, and insect populations on the lake, not to mention the mammals and birds that survive on them.

Pollution is causing too many nutrients to overwhelm this shallow, man-made lake, and soon, it will be a mosquito infested bog if we don't do something about it.

I urge you to prioritize the ecological health of Vancouver lake, for the benefit of us all.

-Trisha Patterson