

Donn Venema

Hello, I am writing to support the addition of Vancouver Lake to your list of water bodies to prioritize for improvement projects. I live in the Lakeshore area just east of the lake and have also been a member of Vancouver Lake Rowing Club for 8 years. As anyone who has been on the lake over that span, I have seen the increase in seasonal algae and the frequent posted warnings to the lake's recreational users. The more recent increase in invasive milfoil has significantly exacerbated the problems facing the health of the lake.

The most important concern to all of us should be user health issues associated with increased algae and other pollutants. The lake is home to both rowing and sailing clubs and, primarily via access at Vancouver Lake Park, is used by countless swimmers, kayakers, paddleboarders and canoeists. For all of these users any water toxicity can curtail or put a complete halt to their use of the lake. And for those that don't heed the warnings, or if water testing is inadequate, illness can result.

In addition to the impact on local users, it must also be clear that the county is in danger of losing an incredibly valuable economic resource. Several water-related events are held at the lake that bring in participants from far and wide. With those visitors come income to hotels, restaurants and other local businesses. Just looking at my particular focus, rowing, I know that the lake is viewed as an ideal venue for regattas, and has become the preferred venue for major events for both youth and adult athletes. The increasingly deteriorating condition of the lake due to both algae and milfoil could easily mean that those events will move elsewhere.

The lake is a gem for our community and shouldn't be allowed to continue to decline. It would be a shame if ignoring the lake's current issues let conditions get to a point of no return. I hope that in years to come we don't look back and realize that we missed the opportunity to save this resource.

Thank you,

Donn Venema