

Eric Hale

I would like to encourage Vancouver Lake and its local watershed to be a high priority for TMDL prioritization in the upcoming evaluation. The nutrient load and shallow depths make water quality a recurring yearly problem that can be tied directly to manmade causes.

Many of the long term residents along the lake have anecdotal stories about pets who have died from blue-green algae. The increase in residential development near the entrance of Burnt Bridge Creek brings an increased risk to people, especially children, who have come here specifically for the beauty and recreational opportunities Vancouver Lake offers. The cove looks like pea soup with the thickness of the algal blooms for much of the summer.

There are also lots of stories from retired people who grew up around the lake and local legends suggesting that the diversity of fish and wildlife has decreased dramatically. A local biologist has described the current conditions as more death trap than habitat for juvenile salmon. Without the historic yearly flooding to scour the lake, it continues to infill and decrease in habitat quality.

There has been a recent grassroots effort to force action on lake water quality after bureaucratic failings because the local community that is aware of the lake and its problems value it highly. I hope these issues and local demand can help show how desired and necessary state level support is.