

Chris Gibbons

I would like to submit my support for the prioritization of Vancouver Lake as a valuable watershed and recreational asset. Vancouver Lake is an amazing resource for our community, not only in its proximity to population as a place to congregate and experience the joys of being outside and witnessing diverse waterfowl, fish, and flora. It is a necessary termination point of substantial water flow from suburban development, agriculture, and industry before emptying into the Columbia River.

Community gathering places and essential watershed are not antagonistic. Well tended, well managed, regulated watersheds provide a perfect opportunity for the citizens of Vancouver to celebrate and learn about their natural environment in a context of balance between the human built environment and nature.

Currently, Vancouver Lake is off limits due to toxic algae blooms during prime months for recreation thus limiting increasing numbers of citizens an opportunity to learn about their local natural impact, share experience as a community, and make memories that will inspire them to care about watershed in the future. It has instead served as the collection well for chemicals and sediment regionally. And without prioritization it will soon degrade to a point where "rescue" is as onerous as the risks it already poses to the health of citizens, waterfowl, and fish. I urge action now to help preserve a watershed resource on the brink of becoming a problem too big to tackle (never an excuse but often used as one). Please take action.