



VANCOUVER
BOARD OF
PARKS AND
RECREATION

May 27, 2025

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Director, Park Planning and Development

SUBJECT : **Lost Lagoon Algae Bloom – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

During the week of May 12, Operations staff noticed an algae bloom in Lost Lagoon. This early surface algae growth is likely the result of a combination of the Lagoon's shallow depth, higher-than-normal nutrients in the water and a brief period of warm, calm weather. Staff's recommendation is to let the bloom run its course. An algal bloom also recently [occurred](#) in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park near Victoria. As Lost Lagoon is not promoted for human access or swimming events, PB and Coastal Health have no plans to test these algae.

The rapid increase of algae in water bodies can have detrimental effects on aquatic ecosystems by blocking sunlight. They usually take place later in the summer when weather is warmer, and water levels are lower; high nutrient levels are relatively unusual for Lost Lagoon at this time of year. With available data, it is difficult to know the exact cause of the bloom, however a potential source of nutrients is the biofiltration pond in the NE corner of Lost Lagoon. The biofiltration pond is designed to capture nutrients like nitrogen from stormwater runoff from the road surface of causeway. The biofiltration pond is due to be dredged and could be releasing excess nutrients into the lagoon, causing this early season algae bloom.

Staff have been aware of the ecological issues and challenges at Lost Lagoon for some time and, over the last few years, have been exploring various feasible solutions to restore the area. Lost Lagoon was formerly a tidal ecosystem but is now an artificially isolated body of water created in the early 1900s when the causeway was built.

The lack of flushing that would happen naturally in the Lost Lagoon area is a major contributor to the water quality issues, along with other localized environmental impacts. Staff are currently working on a Lost Lagoon Reconnection Feasibility Study, exploring the possibility of creating a long-term reconnection to tidal Coal Harbour. This is in coordination with the Stanley Park Comprehensive Planning work being undertaken with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations that the Board will begin to discuss this fall.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tiina Mack".

Tiina Mack - MBCSLA
Director, Park Planning and Development – Vancouver Parks and Recreation

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
Chad Townsend
Andrew Seeton