

Partnership to consider Vancouver Lake

Vancouver (June 7, 2004) –A new partnership is coming together to tackle the multi-faceted issues and opportunities facing Vancouver Lake.

The Vancouver Lake Watershed effort, still in its early formative stages, is bringing together staff members with scientific and technical emphasis from the following agencies: the Port of Vancouver, City of Vancouver, Clark County, Clark Public Utilities, Port of Ridgefield, Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Army Corps of Engineers, and the state departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife. Plans for public participation are still being developed, with additional information expected late this month.

As a vital regional resource, Vancouver Lake fulfills a variety of functions – wildlife habitat; flood control; wetlands, surface water and ground water hydrology; boating, bird watching, hiking, hunting and other recreational activities; and environmental education and stewardship.

Government agencies share interest, involvement and authority over those many and diverse lake functions, which have been shaped by years of public interest and activities, from farming in the late 1800s to the public-private Habitek Consortium work in the 1980s.

“We will have the right players around the table to tackle water quality issues at Vancouver Lake and allow it to continue as one of the region’s premier environmental and recreational assets,” said David Judd, Vancouver Director of Parks and Recreation.

The 2,600-acre Vancouver Lake is the back yard of the Fruit Valley Neighborhood, which welcomes the effort. Lee McCallister, Neighborhood Chairman, believes all of Southwest Washington should pull together for the sake of this regional asset. “We all believe a good environment is a clean environment,” McCallister said. “We’re asking for more help. We don’t need the hindrances. We need the help.”

Brian Carlson, Public Works Director for the City of Vancouver, agreed that the effort will require much participation and work. “We need to explore these challenges together, in a way that recognizes the interdependence of all aspects of the lake and those who care for it,” he said.

“It is great to see a partnership of so many state and local agencies working together to address a significant community issue,” said Peter Capell, Clark County Director of Public Works. “It is going to take the support and cooperation of all of the agencies working together to make this successful project.”

“Quality of life is important to businesses and residents alike,” said Larry Paulson, Executive Director of the Port of Vancouver. “We look forward to this united effort to further address issues facing Vancouver Lake.”

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Media Note: The above is a collaborative effort of involved agencies. For additional information, please contact: Loretta Callahan, Public Information/Community Relations, City of Vancouver Public Works at (Office) 360.759.4479 or (Cell) 360.609.3002.