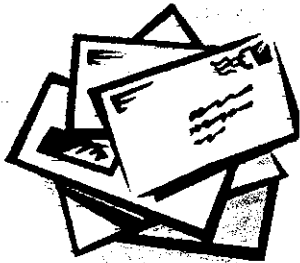




# LETTER: Once Annexed, Can Burien Handle An Unhealthy Arbor Lake?

B-Town Blog, Posted by Scott Schaefer on Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at 5:01 pm



**Arbor Lake is one, small, unhealthy lake.**

Within the next few weeks, the City of Burien will annex this lake into the city. The lake's health problems, in large part, come from its public access. A couple times per month, citizen scientists visit Arbor Lake to perform visual assessments of the environmental and physical conditions around the lake. The reports from those visits are not good. Currently, King County has a clean-up crew at Arbor Lake seven days per week. The crew reports that there is litter (bottles, cans, paper, plastics, paint cans, used condoms, needles, etc.), biological wastes (poop, vomit), damage to the park equipment and gang tagging daily to clean up. They worry that Burien will not have the financial resources to provide this seven day a week routine just to maintain the lake and surrounding area at its current level. The worst damage happens to the lake on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This is a time at which Burien typically does not contract for park clean up.

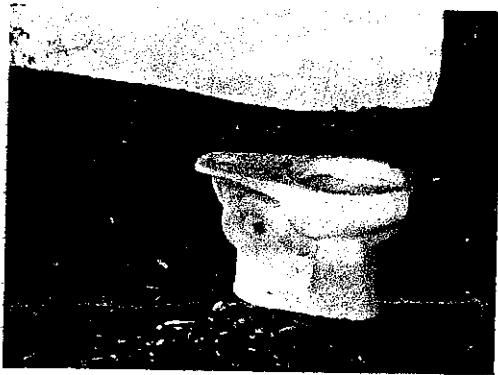


Photo courtesy Arbor Lake area resident Colleen West.

A number of the neighbors around Arbor Lake say that they would never consider swimming in the lake because the water quality is so poor. Several drainage pipes empty into the lake and there is a lot of non-point pollution entering the lake. Arbor Lake is obviously infested with fecal coliform bacteria (E.coli) because of the amount of poop that is around the lake at times. Remember E.coli is that stuff that sickened and killed people who ate infected food. The major cause of this E.coli is not from birds. It is from humans and dogs pooping in and around the lake. During the summer, the lake has major infestations of invasive weeds that choke out the oxygen in the lake and make the water impossible to sustain any fish. At that time, the water is not healthy for the birds to use either.



Photo courtesy Arbor Lake area resident Colleen West.

The Native Plant society has attempted to help the lake by planting some native plants but clearly a great deal more needs to be done to help this small lake get back on the road to recovery. Most of the homes on the east side of the lake are heavily gated to protect the owners from public intrusion into their homes and property. No Trespassing signs are everywhere. The road running along the west side of the lake has had to be blockaded due to car racing and crimes. The King County Sheriff frequently has to visit the lake. Like Lake Hicks, Arbor Lake has fared poorly with public access. The City of Burien will be picking up a big financial bill, if it plans to care for and restore Arbor Lake.

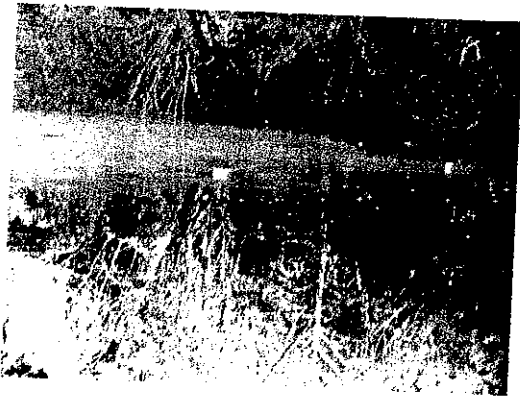


Photo courtesy Arbor Lake area resident Colleen West.

What Burien really needs to provide for citizens is a swimming pool where they can learn to swim and enjoy the pleasure of water exercise. Most small lakes do not do well (water health wise) having heavy public access. Arbor Lake and Hicks Lake have not been able to meet the demands that the greater public has on them and perhaps that is not their real ecological purpose. These fragile bodies of freshwater are not sketchy line drawings on paper, art work, public swimming pools or public garbage cans. They are living, functioning natural systems that deserve respect, understanding, protection and care. Do not plan on having your kids swim in Arbor Lake soon for both your kids' and the lake's health.

