

Communication from Mark Henschel on 9.2 Swan Lake Water Quality Improvement Program

Hi

I know this is last minute but I hope that this brief message might be a positive contribution to the discussion and deliberations today.

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For many of us the particular attraction of Swan Lake Park is the surprisingly rich biodiversity that has been the result of the relatively "light touch" of the City and of the human visitors. It's actually quite remarkable what nature will do when (mostly) left to its own devices.

However, as a converted gravel quarry with no connection to the larger natural systems Swan Lake is ultimately an unsustainable transient artifact unless we step in with some level of intervention. Nothing lasts forever but it would be nice to prolong the life of this little project.

At this point I fear that actions sufficient to upgrade the water quality to desirable levels -- particularly if those aspirations are unrealistically high -- and to turn the park into something more akin to a venue than the environmental enclave it has become will be the park's undoing. A large-scale dredging of the lake could easily result in the elimination of the accumulated bio-richness... never to return. The character that makes the park so special will be lost. It may be that such a future is ultimately inevitable.

If accumulating and accumulated phosphorus is in fact the root of the problem -- and I would like to see that verified by Freshwater Research -- then reducing both the influx and the accrued deposit would seem an obvious place to start.

But rather than proposing and considering what are essentially "silver bullet" solutions or temporary prophylactics why not take a more nuanced and gently multi-faceted one. Here's one idea:

Use goose control and other measures to limit the influx of phosphorus on an ongoing basis.

Deploy the prophylactic of Phoslock *as soon as possible* but find a way to *incrementally remove the existing accumulations too*. Perhaps, scale this to match or just exceed the annual rate of deposit. This could lead to a modest, predictable annual expenditure that takes us as close to sustainability as we are likely to get whilst availing nature of the best opportunity to do the rest.

Hope this helps.

Mark Henschel