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TALK
w/ BYRON

PORT OF VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON (U.S.A.)

March 24, 1988

MEMORANDUM

TO: Byron H. Hanke, Executive Director

FROM: Richard F. Gorini, Director of Planning & Development

SUBJECT: IRC Grant Request to Monitor Vancouver Lake

My initial reaction to the IRC Grant Request is quite mixed in that they proceeded without consultation with the Port and I am not at all sure they understand the dynamics of the Vancouver Lake system hydraulics nor what a monitoring program for Vancouver Lake should be. On the other hand, as we have discussed, there is a need for periodic monitoring and, possibly, maintenance dredging in selected spots; the Port should probably coordinate with IRC - if they prove to be the logical agency. As of this writing, Mr. Mallory has not returned any of my calls to discuss the matter.

1. The posting of the beach by the Health District was, as I recall, based on an abundance of caution and not on whether the coliform count exceeds standards - which is variable during the year. Generally, except at low water, the lake's water quality is "good" (i.e. it meets or exceeds the State standards). In any case, the water quality of the lake will never be better than the Columbia River. (Note: The Health District has not been contacted either - reference Tom Barton.)
2. If there is a problem, it is that the County has not completed their part of the project - sewerage the County's portion of the Burnt Bridge Creek Basin and implementing the Basin Storm Drainage Plan with the City. Likewise, the County has not implemented the "Best Management Practices" for agricultural activities - i.e., stop animal wastes and fertilizers from getting in the creek and lake.
3. There will always be the potential for algae blooms in the lake because of the nutrient load of the Columbia River. However, these blooms are minimal during NORMAL low water flow (they don't occur during high water flows); in 1987, low water was below normal and 1988 will be worse - there will be algae blooms under these conditions - the water isn't high enough to flush as designed.
4. The Port's follow-up study showed virtually no sedimentation occurring. It is estimated the Port will have to dredge the sump hole at the junction of the Columbia River once every 5-7 years at 40,000 - 50,000 cubic yards. Inside the lake, maintenance dredging may be needed every 25 years. No sedimentation was predicted to occur from Salmon Creek.

Memo to BHH:
Re: IRC Grant Req to Monitor
Vancouver Lake

-2-

March 23, 1988

Thus, you can see that IRC submitted a proposal with - at best - a limited understanding of the project and therefore, one should be cautious of the proposed monitoring program and how the results might be interpreted.

All this notwithstanding, there is a need for some kind of monitoring program - but it is one that must be developed with the Port, DOE and EPA in lead roles, (at the very least, the Port and DOE). Simply, the Port has maintenance responsibilities in any case. (We do annual maintenance on the flushing channel apparatus.)

There are several ways this can be carried out - after a monitoring program is firmed up:

- o The Port could contract with Ogden Beeman and Associates - who devised the dredging plan and did part of the follow-up studies;
- o The Port could contract with the Health District;
- o The Port could contract with the DOE; or,
- o The Port could contract with IRC

Please note that I do not mean to imply the costs for monitoring are solely the Port's. I believe cost sharing would be part of the negotiations in establishing a monitoring program. As the IRC proposal is written, they could end up presenting the Port with a "solution" the Port had no part in developing - and put the Port on the defensive.

RECOMMENDATION: Contact DOE to discuss this memo and the IRC proposal; and, with DOE work out an ongoing monitoring program that occurs "automatically" - i.e. the Port doesn't need to worry if something has been forgotten - only that the Port budgets a modest share of the cost periodically.

NOTE: I would suspect that the monitoring might only have to be done on a 3-5 year interval - and would focus primarily on sedimentation. The Health Department tests every summer to determine whether or not the water is safe for swimming.

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