

The Lake Merritt Institute

LAKE TRASH REMOVAL, FOUNTAINS, EDUCATION, LAKE MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

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CREEK TO BAY DAY – WE NEED YOU: To keep Lake Merritt clean enough for all the boating activities shown in this photo, we need volunteers to clean the waterways on Saturday, Sept. 20th from 9 am to noon. Lake Merritt activities will focus on the estuary channel, will include an anti-pollution “video fest” from 8:30 am – 1 pm and include pizza at 12:15 for those reporting the number of bags of trash collected. T-shirts will be provided by the City of Oakland for those who sign in and read / initial the safety sheet. Work will also include installing storm drain outfall numbers around the Lake and cleaning up watershed “trash hot spots.”



DEAD MAN’S FINGERS DISCOVERED IN LAKE: No not people or chicken fingers; algae. Never before reported in Lake Merritt, it is now growing in shallow water clumps by the Nature Center and elsewhere. About 6 - 12 inches long, it looks like a sponge, and is also called sponge weed. The scientific name is *Codium fragile*. It has dark green – black finger like fronds about a quarter inch in diameter. It is apparently a summer visitor to the Lake, and is native to at least the area from San Francisco to San Diego. Finally, a new species that is not exotic.

Hmmm, what else is out there?

Blue Green Algae? It has also come to our attention that cyanobacteria (formerly known as blue green algae) may exist in the Lake. Some of these can be nasty, producing toxic chemicals known as cyanotoxins, including some called microcystins, which can cause liver damage in people. Other cyanotoxins have been implicated in the deaths of several dogs and cats. In recent years, levels of these have caused closure to all water contact activities at Green Lake, in the center of the most popular park in Seattle. Green Lake is similar to Lake Merritt except that it is fresh water. It is shallow, eutrophic and has restricted flows (sound familiar?). To remedy the problem, Seattle formerly discharged drinking water to the Lake (we don’t) and then began treating stormwater (we don’t) harvesting aquatic plants (we do) managing waterfowl (we don’t) educating the public (we do) and applying alum to reduce internal loading of phosphorous from the sediments (we don’t). For more details, see the summer issue of *LAKELINE* by the North American Lake Management Society.

YOUR LITTER CAN OUTLIVE YOU! According to a recent poster issued by the Irish Sea Fisheries Board (now proudly on the wall in our office) much of the litter carelessly thrown around by litterbugs will outlive them, and by a long time. “Marine Debris Biodegradation Time Line” depicts how long it takes to break down twenty different types of trash. Starting with paper towels (2-4 weeks) and ending with glass bottles (time unknown), it includes cardboard boxes (2 months) tin cans (50 years) Styrofoam cups (50 years) plastic beverage holders (400 years) and plastic bottles (450 years). It is sad to think that litterbugs can have such a long lasting effect on the environment.

US PROPOSES EASIER GOOSE CONTROL: The US Fish & Wildlife Service is currently accepting comments on its proposed rule to allow states to control the size of non-migratory Canada geese populations. These birds have become a problem at Lake Merritt (see July newsletter) and elsewhere (see “Managing Canada Geese in Urban Environments” in our library). The ruling would remove some federal protection under the Migratory Bird Act, and authorize population control strategies such as aggressive harassment, nest destruction, gosling and adult trapping and culling programs, increased hunter harvest et cetera. The rule was developed during the environmental impact statement process which was started several years ago, and would eliminate the need for federal permits for many goose control activities.

Meanwhile, at Lake Elizabeth in nearby Fremont, the City has purchased its own trained dog as part of a program to keep goose numbers under control. Luke continually chases them into the water, and eventually, they go elsewhere: Like here. At last count, our population was 343 on August 13th down from a summer peak of 1,935. While a smaller, winter population may not cause problems, unlimited access to all areas of Lakeside park by 1,935 geese causes many people to avoid Lake Merritt, and creates a bad experience for many of those who do come.

The federal government would like to reduce the national population of resident Canada geese from 3.2 million to 2.1 million over ten years. California (and Oakland) have not made any decisions on how to proceed in lowering goose numbers. The Lake Merritt Master Plan recommends creation of a goose management plan, but it remains un-funded.

DD UPDATE: The next meeting of the measure DD citizen’s coalition will be on Monday, September 15th, from 7 – 9 pm; location to be announced. Consideration is being given to having the coalition receive about \$15,000 from DD for administrative support and outreach (and fund raising?) possibly by Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation. No decision has been reached at this time.



One possible location for a DD storm drain filter is here in front of the Nature Center, just above outfall #2. However, if the storm drain elevation would not be above high tide here, the filter would have to be further upstream along Perkins Avenue. It would catch trash, sediment etc. from part of Grand Avenue and a large portion of Adams Point.

The Institute has provided two memos to the Public Works Agency outlining: •Locations for three storm drain filters that could be installed this year in Lakeside Park; and: •Locations for storm drain filters upstream in the watershed along Broadway/Rockridge branches, Glen Echo creek, Pleasant Valley, Wildwood and Trestle Glen Creeks.