

April 7, 2024

Friends of Cottage Lake – State of the Lake

[Friends of Cottage Lake](#) is a 501(c)3 charity and all donations are tax deductible. We are raising money to help fund several projects to improve the health of the lake.

A Little History:

[Friends of Cottage Lake](#) has been active for many years working to improve the Lake and the community which surrounds it. In the mid-2000's, we removed massive patches of lily pads (fragrant water lilies) that were choking out lake access at the north and south ends of the lake and since then have been working to control invasive milfoil. We educate newcomers on purple loosestrife removal and the importance of septic maintenance, and we work with King County to mitigate the effects of beaver dams. Over time we have formed friendships, united in concern for what is best for the Lake. We don't always agree on the best answer, but the organization gives us a forum for discussion and progress.



Algae Blooms:

One of the long term challenges for Cottage Lake is excess phosphorus – we worked with King County and the Washington State Department of Ecology to explore the sources of phosphorus and try to reduce them (see the [final report from 2011](#)). Although significant work was done, excess phosphorus continues to be a problem and the main cause of our algae blooms.

As part of our volunteer lake monitoring in partnership with King County, we collect algae samples when large blooms are seen on the lake. For several years (2015-2016, 2018, 2020-2021), toxic algae was detected in the samples at the end of the summer and the lake was closed to recreation. Toxic algae is very dangerous to pets (especially dogs that might drink the water) and can also be harmful to people. Algae (even when not toxic) also makes the lake less appealing for recreation and fishing. Last year (2023) we saw very large blooms that lasted from August to December – toxin levels never exceeded the state threshold, but clearly we still have a problem (see the [Washington State Toxic Algae](#) site for more information).

[Friends of Cottage Lake](#) has continued researching solutions to our lake's problems. Reducing phosphorus entering the lake is one of the keys – encouraging residents in the watershed to use phosphorus free fertilizer (or not fertilize at all), pick up pet waste, and other behavior changes can help (see page 10 of our [Welcome to the Lake](#) booklet for more suggestions).

We have also been researching water treatments to remove phosphorus from the water and other treatments that might reduce [harmful blue-green algae blooms](#). This year, we hope to try a treatment in partnership with Aquatechnex. Terry (the owner of the company) gave a presentation to a community meeting in May 2022 – you can view the [presentation from Aquatechnex](#) on our website. Aquatechnex has been treating lakes in Washington State for many years and recommended we try a Lanthanum treatment. Based on their analysis of the lake (we did additional lake and sediment sampling in 2023), the best treatment given our budget is to do two "water column stripping" treatments (May and July) to remove phosphorus from the water column with an estimated cost of about \$56,000.00.

We are working with Aquatechnex on the feasibility of the phosphorus treatment (they need the ability to launch a larger boat so we may need to work with King County Parks on options – see help needed below) and we also plan to host a community meeting to discuss the options before the spring.

Milfoil Update:

The lake was treated in 2022 by Aquatechnex with ProcellaCOR – based on surveys this spring (2023) the treatment was largely successful, although we did see a lot of native weeds fill in areas that used to have milfoil in the summer. We have not looked into whether we can remove the native weeds, but may do so in the future if the problem gets worse.

You can read about our problems with invasive weeds in the [Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan](#). Invasive fragrant water lilies are also slowly coming back, so we will need to treat them again in the future.

Lake Level:

The lake level is controlled by beaver dams and the pond levelers (beaver deceivers) that we worked with King County to install through the original dams. This year, the beavers built a new dam further downstream and drove the lake level up causing flooding at the park and in many yards. We worked with Beavers NW to install a notch exclusion fence which provided about 6 weeks of relief before the beavers built a new dam at the lake outlet. Beavers NW was able to update their permit to allow them to work at the new dam, but the dam is currently not active (dismantled). If the dam is left alone and becomes active again, we'll work with Beavers NW to notch it.

Finances:

[Friends of Cottage Lake](#) relies on your donations to pay for treatments - remember, all donations are tax deductible.

Last year, we continued collecting donations and [Friends of Cottage Lake](#) ended the year with approx. \$70,000 in the bank and donations have continued to come in. At this point, we are able to pay for the initial phosphorus treatment, but will continue to fundraise as it is likely we will have to do follow-up treatments next year.

We plan to have a spring fundraiser at [Bassetti's Crooked Arbor Gardens](#) on Sunday, May 19, 2024. You can also just mail in a check using the attached form or donate directly using [PayPal](#).

Volunteer Help Needed:

Our lake faces a number of challenges and it will take a collective effort to tackle them. Please see the list of volunteer needs below and raise your hand to pitch in:

- Help organizing a community meeting (early May?), coordinating volunteers, and finding additional board members, etc. In the past, we have used the library meeting room, but it may no longer be available in the evening so we need to find a new place to meet.
- Beavers – looking for someone to take point with Beavers NW, research other options (relocation?), and organize additional volunteers if needed
- Cottage Lake Park – if we want to unblock lake treatments, we need to improve access. KC Parks has a plan to improve the beach and we are working with them to improve access for treatment.

- Drainage on 185th Ave NE to Daniels Creek – runoff from NE 179th St goes straight into the creek instead of being filtered through the grass ditch. There is also a long term plan to replace the culvert under the road.
- Noise and light from the corner of Woodinville-Duvall Rd after the buildings were removed – possibly follow-up on the new project (gas station and fast-food restaurant) to see if barriers or additional trees could be part of the construction.

Public outreach and website:

Friends of Cottage Lake uses email, Facebook, and our public website to keep people updated on lake projects, issues, and other relevant information. Please let me know if you would like to be added or removed from our email list – here are the other relevant links:

Website: www.friendsofcottagelake.org

Facebook public site: www.facebook.com/FOCL.Woodinville

Facebook private group: www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofcottagelake

Thanks in advance for your support,

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Friends of Cottage Lake

2024 Membership and Donation Form

- ☐ **Yes, I would like to be a member (2024 annual dues) \$ 20.00**
- ☐ **Yes, I would like to make a donation to support FOCL programs (water lily and milfoil eradication, phosphorus reduction, water quality monitoring, shoreline restoration, \$_____ etc.) in the amount of:**

Total enclosed: \$_____

Please mail this form along with your check made payable to Friends of Cottage Lake
Your membership dues & donations are tax deductible

Please provide contact information if you would like to be added to our email and mailing lists to be notified of upcoming meetings, issues, etc.

Member Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

You can also join our group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/FOCL.Woodinville>



or watch our website for the latest news: <http://www.friendsofcottagelake.org>

