

The following letter was received by the LSCC board who want to share it with LSCC residents. LSCC residents that have an interest to learn more about this issue or have questions are encouraged to contact Sally Bartley Abella (King County Lake Stewardship Program) at 206-296-8382 or Steve Foley (KC Stormwater Services) at 206 296-1973

Subject: Horseshoe Lake

Hello everyone,

I'd like to inform the City of Black Diamond and the Lake Sawyer Community Club of a situation developing just outside the city limits which could damage private property and potentially cause environmental problems. With the record rainfall in January, possible flooding is threatening homes built along the shoreline of Horseshoe Lake, located just southwest of Lake Sawyer on the SE Auburn-Black Diamond Road. Those of you who have been around for awhile may remember previous flooding threats in the 1990s. To recap the hydrologic situation, Horseshoe Lake has no outlet and is intimately connected to the shallow aquifer which draws from areas in both King County and Black Diamond. In winter, the lake levels are closely tied to groundwater levels rather than to short-term stormwater run-off. Since the lake has no outlet levels can reach their maximum height 2-3 weeks after severe storms or a long series of moderate events.

If the lake is not lowered by pumping water out, homes can be flooded above the finished floor levels. The direct effects would be property loss from flood damage, with correlated safety and health threats. Another danger would be contamination of the lake water from leaching or spills of commonly used household products. Currently, artificially lowering the water level before it reaches finished levels in the homes is the most cost-effective strategy for dealing with the problem.

In 1991, 1996, and 1997, King County lowered the lake level by pumping water from the lake to Rock Creek, while frequently sampling water quality to be sure that the lake water would not harm the creek or Lake Sawyer. The County would like to plan for doing this again if necessary, and we hope that if we follow similar procedures as used in the past, that the City of Black Diamond and the Lake Sawyer residents will feel confident in the County's ability to prevent private property damage and avoid any environmental problems both in Horseshoe Lake and in the receiving water bodies of Rock Creek and Lake Sawyer.

At the moment, the lake level is at 508 feet msl, which is still below the level at which crawl spaces begin to be flooded. While we hope that the lake does not rise to a level high enough to cause flooding, the danger may remain through the end of the rainy season, and the County must be prepared to implement pumping plans. We have sampled the lake for phosphorus and fecal coliform bacteria in the last two weeks and have found that both are currently well below any level of concern.

Please let us know if you have questions or concerns. You can contact Steve Foley (King County Stormwater Services) at 206-296-1973 or me at 206-296-8382.

Regards,
Sally Abella

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