



June 15, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners
FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT : **Outdoor Lifeguarding at Trout Lake - Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to notify you of the plan to not schedule lifeguarding services at the Trout Lake swimming beach in John Hendry Park for the 2022 summer season. Outdoor Aquatics is continuing to experience impacts from nationwide staff shortages, and so allocating available lifeguards to the busiest beaches will better support outdoor aquatic operations overall while minimizing impact to users considering the reduced opportunities for swimming and water activities at Trout Lake due to water quality issues.

Water Quality

Trout Lake offers the Park Board’s only accessible freshwater swimming destination and it also provides an opportunity for heat relief during warmer summer days. As outlined in the recently approved [John Hendry \(Trout Lake\) Park Renewal Plan](#), water quality concerns have reduced opportunities for swimming and water activities due to high levels of E.coli and so an ongoing water quality monitoring program to measure the effects of interventions is required.

To maintain compliance with [Canadian Recreational Water Quality Guidelines](#), the Park Board contracts weekly water quality testing of potential bathing areas throughout the summer season. The results are provided to staff and Vancouver Coast Health Authority (VCH). As shown in Table 1 below, the last couple of years have seen an increase in the duration of E.coli advisory periods.

Year	# of Days	Advisory Period
2021	57	Jul 7 - Sep 9
2020	32	Aug 10 - Sep 11
2019	13	Jul 17-30
2018	27	Jul18-31; Aug 2-16
2016	44	May 17 - Jun 6; Aug 31 - Sep 23
2012	13	Jul 26 - Aug 8

Table 1: Annual VCH E.coli Advisories

Bather Numbers

In 2021, staff conducted ten site visits to review bather loads and beach conditions. All site visits were conducted on sunny days with bather loads at other Vancouver waterfront locations ranging from 20 to 300. During these visits, the maximum number of bathers counted at Trout Lake was six on one occasion, with zero to two swimmers being the norm. The sand area (beach) was not used on any of these occasions due to the high presence of goose droppings.

Lifeguard Shortage

The ongoing shortage of lifeguards, which started pre-pandemic, is a recognized challenge for aquatic operations across North America, with impacts increasing in all regions. All aspects of the Park Board’s aquatics operations have been impacted by these staffing challenges. In 2021,



the number of outdoor aquatics staff available on any specific date during the summer season could not meet operational demands; staff levels were maintained on beaches through the use of significant overtime, new hires, and when required, the decision to not staff select low demand waterfront sites. Staffing levels continue to be a significant factor in the indoor aquatics system, which indicates the outdoor system may share ongoing challenges in 2022. The plan to not provide lifeguard services at Trout Lake will assist with focussing much needed staff resources to higher demand areas.

Next Steps

As [directed by the Board](#), staff will continue to develop and implement plans to prioritize water quality improvements to ensure safe swimming and reduce closures at Trout Lake. In the meantime, in recognition of the various factors that currently limit swimming opportunities at that beach, it is anticipated that not providing lifeguard services at Trout Lake this season will have minimal impact on park users and will help support staffing demands at the busier beaches. Onsite signage and public communications will emphasize safety, the importance of protecting natural aspects, and health concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donnie Rosa', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)
General Manager - Parks and Recreation

/ts/pf/clc

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
PB Recreation Leadership Team
PB Communications