

I Remember Lost Lagoon



Lost Lagoon 2010

I remember when Lost Lagoon was loved and beloved. I remember when there were park workers who walked around the lagoon every day with a net and rubber boots, making sure the lagoon was free of rubbish – they also chatted and smiled with passers-by. Now there is always litter around the lagoon. No matter what time of day I walk around the lagoon, I can always collect a bag or more of rubbish.

I remember when Mute Swans swam and nested on the lagoon (pinioned, so they couldn't fly away). They were loved, treasured, and cared for – until the parks board inchingly began neglecting them, because they didn't want them anymore. They got 'experts' in to proclaim they were not native – experts who didn't care there were Mute Swans in Richmond and elsewhere in the province, who weren't pinioned. It was only against the Lagoon swans they had a vendetta.



Swans 2015

I remember when a nesting Mute Swan was killed by otters at the lagoon (as we were told) because the park's board took away her mate leaving her with no protection. A parks board that can willingly erect miles of fencing to keep people out of park areas during Covid, but refused adequate protection for the swans. Luckily for the remaining swans they were moved to a kinder environment.

I remember when the bird houses for the tree swallows were taken down at the end of every summer and cleaned and put out cleaned and fresh in early spring to encourage this endangered species. Now they put out fewer birdhouses and appear to be increasingly neglecting them.

I remember when there were lots of turtles at the lagoon – being an enclosed environment that had never housed turtles before, red sliders and others thrived and helped to keep the waters clean. Then we were told they were 'invasive species', with no one bothering to say they are also an endangered species; but it seems the parks board doesn't care about anything that doesn't fit their agenda.



Turtles 2015

I remember beautiful perfect spider webs around the lagoon – especially in autumn. That was when Stanley Park was a self-supporting environment, boasting no pesticides. That was before the continuing poisoning of Lost Lagoon, beginning with Monsanto a few years back, which killed off most of the bees. Now the spider webs are messy, in response to the continuing, systemic poisoning of the lagoon. Now the lady-bugs have almost disappeared as well, because of poisoning to kill the Japanese beetle.



I remember yellow irises spotting the periphery of lost lagoon, supporting an amazing dragonfly population – before most of the irises were completely pulled instead of thinned, destroying a huge percentage of dragonflies and increasing the tiny insect population accordingly. *“In their larval stage, which can last up to two years, dragonflies are aquatic and eat just about anything—tadpoles, mosquitoes, fish, other insect larvae and even each other.”* They are also *“so efficient in their hunting that, in one Harvard University study, the dragonflies caught 90 to 95 percent of the prey released into their enclosure.* (<https://getpocket.com/explore/item/14-fun-facts-about-dragonflies>)”



Lost Lagoon Irises 2012



Blue Darner Dragonfly 2015

I remember when there were thin pipes put under the stone bridge, beneath the beaver dam to keep fresh water coming into the lagoon. I also watched over the years, as it gradually plugged up and no one cared.



Dead Carp 2021

I remember the year when most of the fish died in the lagoon and no one at the parks board would open sluice gates or shift the beaver dam under the stone bridge that was blocking fresh waters from coming in. The parks board obviously wanted the fish gone. When hundreds of dead fish polluted the lagoon, no one bothered to remove them until people complained about the smell. Another incident of intentional neglect and abandonment.



Chickadee 2015

I remember a Lost Lagoon where one could feed birdseed to the sparrows, chickadees and towhees and the communion between birds and parkgoers was magical. Now people are demonized and punished for feeding the birds. (In England, they teach what and what not to feed the birds whereas Vancouver's parks' board prefers to put up massive, trashy signs around the park; eyesores that pollute the scenery.)

I remember when the fountain at Lost Lagoon offered extraordinary rainbows and movement to the lagoon. In 2017, it was decided that it was too expensive to repair or replace. The parks board preferred to let the lagoon grow stagnant and polluted, because they already had a hidden agenda to get rid of the lagoon. Innumerable cities around the world are able to maintain, upgrade and appreciate their prize fountains for centuries – but not Vancouver.



Lost Lagoon 2015

Lost Lagoon is now a haven for the homeless with discarded beer tins, empty drug bags, and discarded needles to be found under bushes. One day I collected over a dozen used and unused needles from beneath bushes.



Tent and rubbish 2023

Trash bins are sometimes overflowing because they haven't been emptied or checked regularly. Park staff has been cut to minimum, so we only see workers occasionally – mostly in vehicles, driving by too quickly to notice anything amiss. The park has become a haven for the homeless and drug addicted, because the city refuses to create any proper withdrawal/ rehabilitation centers (offering increasing drugs and needles to addicts instead).

I also remember the first time, more than 10 years ago, when I saw a small article proposing the idea of getting rid of lagoon and making it a saltwater throughway again. Gradually I realized it might not be a proposal, but an intention, with continuing and increasing neglect every year.



Lost Lagoon is loved and beloved by citizens of this city and remains an amazing tourist draw. Despite continuing and intentional neglect, and despite the increasing corruption of the Parks Board and City Government, Lost Lagoon remains a jewel in the crown of Stanley Park – the mystic heart of Vancouver.

Let's not lose it.