

Parks commissioners call for demolition of Jericho Beach wharf

BY CHERYL CHAN, THE PROVINCE SEPTEMBER 13, 2010



Vancouver Parks Board Commissioner Ian Robertson is demanding that the parks board take immediate action to remove the rotting wharf at Jericho Beach. Fisheries and Oceans Canada outlines that fish habitat and other marine life is being severely compromised due to toxic contaminants leeching into the water from old creosote pilings.

Photograph by: Mark van Manen, PNG

Two Vancouver parks board commissioners are renewing calls for the demolition of the historic Jericho Beach wharf, citing environmental concerns.

The wharf's old creosote pilings are leeching toxic contaminants into the water and destroying fish habitat and marine life in the area, say commissioners Ian Robertson and Stuart Mackinnon, who cited a Fisheries and Oceans Canada report.

Robertson, and NPA commissioner, and Mackinnon, a Green, want the wharf removed and the area returned to nature.

"Returning this area to its natural habitat will enhance the area and create a haven for both people and nature," says Mackinnon. "It's time the [park board] moved on this".

In 2008, the parks board voted to remove a significant portion of the wharf, but that plan was abandoned after the current board voted in March 2009 to rescind the decision.

The reversal came in part after a public outcry about loss of the wooden pier that was part of a base during the Second World War.

“This is another example of the Vision Vancouver Park Board caucus waffling on a decision by the previous [parks] board to return the beach to a natural foreshore,” said Robertson.

“Not only is taxpayer money being wasted, but now we have a significant environmental problem.”

Four Vision Vancouver commissioners have the majority on the seven-person board.

The wharf was used by the Royal Canadian Air Force as a float plane base.

It has been fenced off and inaccessible to the public since summer 2009 due to age-related structural problems.

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