



# PORTLAND'S TOXIC ALGAE BLOOMS: CAUSES & CULPRITS



**ROSS ISLAND** has become the source of yearly toxic blooms in the Willamette due to decades of corporate malfeasance

## THE HISTORY: Ross Island Sand & Gravel co. (RISG)

- **1926:** The Army Corps of Engineers builds an artificial embankment in the southeast of Ross Island, **obstructing flow** through the island complex & creating a lagoon
- **1926 - 2001:** RISG extracts thousands of tons of gravel, supporting downtown PDX's development & creating a **120ft deep pool** at the center of the Ross Island Lagoon

## THE RESULT: A Perfect Breeding Ground for Toxic Algae

- Excess nutrients and industrial waste from upstream flow into the lagoon and mix with its stagnant, warm water.
- During the warmer months, this reliably creates algal blooms which travel downstream and endanger human & ecosystem health
- **A warming climate** = more frequent blooms!

## Dangers of Algae Blooms

Algae blooms can cause mild-to-severe **illness in humans** and wildlife, can be **deadly to pets**, and disrupt salmon runs. After years of cleanup, our Willamette is finally safe for swimming again - but **blooms regularly interrupt that safety.**

## TAKE BACK OUR RIVER!

There are multiple proposed engineering solutions, **but none of them are likely without significant public pressure.** RISG and other responsible parties have dodged accountability for years, but **we don't have to accept yearly toxic blooms** because of their negligence!

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