



News from: **Oakland Public Works**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lake Merritt Project to Improve Oxygen Levels and Water Quality for Wildlife

Oakland, CA – On August 15th, the City of Oakland installed a new aeration fountain in Lake Merritt—one piece of an ongoing effort to maintain healthy conditions for fish and wildlife at the Lake.

This new device is part of the [Lake Merritt Water Quality Management Pilot Project](#), initiated in response to the 2022 Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB). The Pilot is designed to begin addressing excessive algae growth and the low dissolved oxygen levels associated with the fish kill.

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The new fountain is located near the Pergola by El Embarcadero Avenue and replaces an out-of-service fountain at that location. By mixing air into the water, the fountain will improve dissolved oxygen levels in the Lake, helping to maintain an oxygenated refuge for aquatic life near the fountain. The design and spray settings on the new fountain maximize benefit to wildlife.

By early September, a second device for increasing dissolved oxygen will be installed in the Glen Echo arm of the Lake, near the intersection of Grand and Harrison Avenue. This device will sit on the bottom of the Lake and will not be visible from the shore. The device dissolves oxygen directly into the water, releasing it where it is needed most. The existing fountain at this location will be removed.

While these devices cannot *prevent* HABs, they are one tool that—together with other interventions—may help mitigate their impact on the Lake.

In addition to installing the aeration and oxygenation devices, the Pilot project also includes continuous monitoring of dissolved oxygen and other water quality parameters, a review of prior water quality data collected by others, a stakeholder engagement meeting that was held in January 2023, and a recommendations report that will inform future work.

Initial planning and monitoring are funded in part through the City's budget from July 1, 2023- June 30, 2025. Device installation is a project of [Oakland's Capital Improvement Program](#).

The City is grateful for the support and assistance of the following organizations:

- The Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- The East Bay Municipal Utility District
- The Lake Merritt Institute
- The Measure DD Community Coalition
- The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation
- The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- The San Francisco Estuary Project

The species *Heterosigma akashiwo*, that caused the HAB and fish kill that affected the Bay Area in August and September of 2022, was detected again in San Francisco Bay on August 1, 2023. The recent bloom has largely dissipated at present but could reoccur as summer progresses and conditions change.

For more information on what to do if you see evidence of a HAB, visit the [State of California San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board website](#).

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To view this news release online, visit <https://www.oaklandca.gov/news/2023/lake-merritt-project-to-improve-oxygen-levels-and-water-quality-for-wildlife>.