

PLTA NEWS

Protect Lake Travis Association

June 2007 Volume 27, #1

PLTA ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR June 23, 2007

The Protect Lake Travis Association will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, June 23, 2007 in the Town Hall Room of the Travis County West Service Center (formerly the Travis County Precinct 2 Satellite Offices) at 4501 FM620 located just south of Mansfield Dam. The meeting will start at 2:00 P. M. PLTA will provide an interesting and informative program for this meeting. Topics will include updates on floodplain status and an important report on a possible new source of water for the Colorado, Brazos and Guadalupe river basins. All members, their friends and those interested in PLTA activities are welcome and are urged to attend. The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and Travis County will have representatives at this meeting.

----IN MEMORIUM----

John (Jack) Kay Strickland (Sr.)

May 28, 1911 - Feb. 7, 2007

**Founding Member and Original Director of
Protect Lake Travis Association**

Jack died Feb 7, 2007, after a short illness. Jack and his wife of 59 years, Marian (deceased), and son, John Jr., were founding members and Directors of PLTA. . They were PLTA's first honored "Life Members." John, Jr. remains an active member and is a Director of PLTA.

Jack was chief of quality control for the Rockets Division of Bell during the Apollo space program, verifying the reliability of the lunar ascent engine, which took the Apollo astronauts off the moon's surface back to the Apollo command module in lunar orbit. For all his work in the aerospace industry, PLTA affectionately referred to him as "Our rocket scientist," and counted on his advice and counsel all of his days. We will miss him.

New floodplain maps

"ANY DAY NOW"

By Lonnie Moore, PLTA Board Member

Everyone knows by now that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working on new floodplain maps for Travis County. The new maps will raise the 100-year floodplain elevation along Lake Travis from the current 716' MSL (mean sea level) to 722' MSL, an increase of 6 feet. This level was set by the Corps of Engineers, and once adopted by Travis County and other regulating bodies, the increase will have a significant impact on homebuilding and remodeling permits for lakefront and near-lakefront properties. It will also affect the need for, and the cost of, flood insurance for structures within the new floodplain.

So what is the status of the new maps? According to Stacey Scheffel, Floodplain Administrator for Travis County, she expects to receive the Letter of Final Determination from FEMA "any day now". Ms. Scheffel tells PLTA that FEMA is almost through resolving the formal appeals and protests that were received during the public comment period last year. Once the last appeal is handled, the official determination letter will be issued. By the way, nothing in any of the appeals and protests challenged the Corps' engineering which determined the new 722' floodplain level, so that is still expected to be the final determination.

Once Travis County and other governments, such as Lakeway, Lago Vista, Jonestown, Volente, etc., receive the Letter of Final Determination and accompanying maps, they must adopt the new floodplain levels within their permitting processes within six months. Unless there are further unexpected delays, the new floodplain levels should be in effect within the fourth quarter of 2007. Most regulating bodies require a finished floor elevation (FFE) of at least one foot above the 100-year floodplain, so expect that 723' MSL will be the lowest level to build around Lake Travis. And, while existing structures below 723' will be grandfathered, any future remodeling or rebuilding permits where the rebuilding, addition or remodeling exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure will require that the structure be brought into compliance with the new floodplain requirements.

Any homeowner whose home falls between 716' and 722' should consider obtaining flood insurance now, before the new floodplain goes into effect. You can still obtain the insurance at the lower (non-floodplain) rate and be grandfathered at that rate after the floodplain is raised. You must keep the insurance in effect continually to keep the lower rate.

FEAST OR FAMINE

As this newsletter goes to press, Lake Travis has risen to 681.3 Ft. above Mean Sea Level (MSL) which is a few inches above full pool elevation. The lake is forecast to reach over 683 Ft. MSL in the next few days. This welcome change comes after months of low lake levels which (1) created an enormous reduction in lake activity and (2) required many lake businesses to make drastic changes in marina configurations in adapting to the low lake levels. These are both very expensive issues. Today, marina and private dock owners await their turn for the divers and other personnel who will return their facilities to their original positions.

In the 1980's Cedar Park constructed a water intake on Lake Travis which provides water to some areas in the Brazos River basin. This was contrary to the law which prohibited water transfer from the Colorado River basin to any other river basin. This error soon came to the attention of the legislature, so they simply changed the law to permit the operation. A few months ago, when the lake level was at its lowest, we were admonished to conserve water so that there would be enough to go around. At the same time, we were told that the LCRA was planning to supply water to Leander, and Round Rock, in addition to Cedar Park, through a 96 inch diameter (that's 8 feet) pipeline from Lake Travis. "I suppose we should be grateful it is only a 96 inch pipeline", said Richard Eason, General Manager of the Lakeway Municipal Utility District and a PLTA Board member.

RELIEF IN SIGHT ?

There may be a partial solution to these dramatic increases in demand for Lake Travis water. A new source of water for the growth corridors of the Brazos and the Guadalupe river basins has been proposed, relieving the need to obtain water from Lake Travis for those areas. Lynn Sherman, who is a spokesman for Sustainable Water Resources, a former LCRA executive and a recognized authority on Texas' water matters, will be a featured speaker at our PLTA Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 23rd, 2007 . The meeting begins at 2:00 P.M. and will be held at the Travis County West Service Center, 4501 FM 620 North, next to the Mansfield dam. PLTA members, their friends and interested parties are invited.

**Protect Lake Travis Association
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Address Correction Requested

Lake Travis is Fun --- Let's Keep It That Way !

In This Issue:

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The purpose of the Protect Lake Travis Association is to protect Lake Travis and its watershed from any events and conditions which could affect the health and safety of area residents, recreational users of the lake, and wildlife, and to protect the aesthetic natural beauty and recreational quality of the area.

