

PLTA NEWS

Protect Lake Travis Association

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PLTA ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR JUNE 18, 2005

The Protect Lake Travis Association will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, June 18, 2005 at the Travis County Precinct 2 Satellite Offices at 4501 FM620 located just south of Mansfield Dam. The meeting will start at 2:30 P. M. PLTA will provide an interesting and informative program for this meeting. Topics will include updates on floodplain changes, the progress on the equal drawdown resolution and PLTA activities on Lake Travis pollution control. 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.

MONITORING LAKE TRAVIS FOR POLLUTION

By Bob Vann
Member, PLTA Board of Directors

The Protect Lake Travis Association (PLTA) monitors the Lake Travis portion of the Colorado River watershed for two types of water pollution: **point source** (i.e., sewer plant discharges) and **nonpoint-source**. Both types can be a serious problem to water quality. PLTA tracks and evaluates the point-source discharge permits on an ongoing basis. The nonpoint-source pollution is more difficult for PLTA to monitor.

Nonpoint-source (NPS) water pollution is pollution that does not come from any specific point or location. Its sources are diffuse in nature as pollutants are washed off the land into our rivers and lakes.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that nonpoint-source pollution now accounts for more than 98% of the fecal and total coliform bacteria, 90% of the sediment, 80% of the nitrogen and over 50% of the phosphorous entering the nations' rivers and streams.

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POLLUTION (Continued)

The impacts of nonpoint-source pollution can be widespread and severe. Impacts include:

- Siltation of creeks and reservoirs
- Reduced fish and wildlife habitat
- Growth of aquatic weeds
- Algae blooms and fish kills
- Reduced recreational opportunities because of bacterial contamination and increased turbidity
- Contamination of food and water sources.

Prevention of nonpoint-source pollution is less expensive than correcting the pollution once it has occurred. The economic benefits of preventing nonpoint-source pollution of the Highland Lakes and the Colorado River include:

- Reduce water treatment costs
- Prolonged viability of water storage reservoirs
- Expanded recreational opportunities and resultant economic growth
- Increased property values and tax base along the lake
- Decreased damages to health and property.

Other benefits of controlling nonpoint-source pollution include:

- Increased productivity of range and farmland
- Increased productivity of aquatic ecosystems
- Preservation of diverse wildlife habitat
- Increased recreation and aesthetic opportunities.

The LCRA is the principal enforcement agency for pollution regulations on the Highland Lakes and is reviewing the current 1990 standards. PLTA is a member of the stakeholder group reviewing the ordinance. Other agencies with an interest in the regulatory enforcement are the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the EPA and various other municipalities in the Lake Travis watershed.

Protect Lake Travis Association

FLOODPLAIN ACTIVITY

By Lonnie Moore
PLTA Board Member

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Map Modernization Plan is an effort to redraw the maps that predict where major floods are likely to occur. This FEMA initiative will update existing flood maps and create new maps for all unmapped flood prone areas in the U.S.

The Travis County portion of the project is an important part of the agency's nationwide effort. As population grows along the Colorado River, its tributaries and the Highland Lakes, more people are exposed to the risks of flooding. New information shows that the risk of flooding has changed since the most recent floodplain maps were drawn.

One of the largest studies being used by FEMA was issued last year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and is the first re-examination of flood flows along the Colorado River since the late 1970s. **This report indicates that a 100-year flood on Lake Travis would reach a level six feet higher than previously thought - 722 feet above mean sea level (MSL) instead of 716 Ft, MSL.** If FEMA uses the Corps' data for remapping, the flood hazard boundary zone along Lake Travis would include about 700 more existing structures than it does now.

FEMA expects to have preliminary Travis County flood insurance maps in September, 2005, to be followed by a public review period. Final adoption will probably not occur before summer or fall of 2006. In the meantime, Travis County is issuing warnings along with its building permits, where applicable, advising owners against building below the 722 MSL level. Many communities along Lake Travis, including Lakeway, Lago Vista and others are issuing similar warnings.

After final adoption of new floodplain maps, county and municipal governments can be expected to deny building permits for habitable structures below 722 MSL (or whatever the final figure is). Existing homes would be grandfathered but permits to remodel or rebuild after damage would be denied if the value of the new work exceeds 50% of the value of the grandfathered structure.

PLTA...PROTECT RECREATIONAL QUALITY....NATURAL BEAUTY

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Address Correction Requested

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

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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.

