



THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS

ASSOCIATION

LAKE TRAVIS

253 VENTURE

KEEP IT CLEAN, CLEAR, BEAUTIFUL

LEANDER, TEXAS 78645

FOR YOUR REVIEW

Oct. 5, 1987

LCRA Board Policy on Water Quality: Mr. David Freeman, General Manager of the LCRA, recently held a work session with some of the newly appointed directors along with several of the other directors from previous appointments. He proposed a LCRA water quality policy for the Highland Lakes that **would allow increased effluent lake discharges** provided the effluent quality be improved. Our viewpoint is that this policy will cause further degradation of Lake Travis' water quality. To clarify our position your president, Cecil Laws, made the following comments to those present at the meeting:

There are 3 Protect Lake Associations in the Highland Lakes area. All of these have tried to keep the lakes clean by proposing land use of treated sewage instead of direct discharge into the lakes. Even the best quality treated sewage is still loaded with nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) which cause accelerated decline in the lake water quality. Nitrogen removal is not required on any Highland Lake sewage treatment plant; phosphorus removal is required on some, but at best it is only 2 mg/l, which can produce 2 tons of algae for every million gallons per day of effluent.

The **Protect Lake Travis Association** is a non-profit corporation with no paid employees and is now 5½ years old. Since the first of January, the PLTA has spent \$27,000 for those hearings at the Texas Water Commission related to water quality.

We are concerned because the Water Quality Inventory (a publication of the Texas Water Commission) shows that the middle Highland Lakes are in the worst trophic condition: Buchanan is 13th, LBJ is 36th, Marble Falls is 34th and Travis is 2nd. This ranking is determined by measuring the clarity (depth a white object can be seen from the surface), the amount of plant life in the water (chlorophyll) and the amount of phosphorus in the water. The clarity of LBJ is 4.78 feet and Travis is greater than 12 feet. The chlorophyll level is over two times greater in LBJ than Travis and the phosphorus level is over 2 1/4 times greater in LBJ than Travis. Thirty-seven percent of the lakes in Texas have a better rating than Lake LBJ.

Perhaps the cause for the above pollution is the fact that on these two middle lakes the combined daily discharge of treated sewage is just slightly less than one million gallons per day. The future is even worse as the combined permitted discharges will be 3.8 million gallons per day if Marble Falls gets its permit application approved. The combined discharge on the four other lakes, which are obviously much cleaner, is only 6800 gallons per day.

We are concerned that the sediment samples from Lake Marble Falls as taken and analyzed by the LCRA show that the downstream samples near the effluent discharge are over 30 times higher in nitrogen and 6 times higher in phosphorus than the upstream samples. Additionally, we are concerned that if the Marble Falls sewage treatment plant permit application (with the highest quality of effluent in Central Texas) is granted for lake discharge, the virus flow-through at plant capacity will, on a conservative basis, be 5.6 million virus per day. These can cause hepatitis, gastrointestinal diseases and other disorders.

Lake Travis is becoming polluted from Lake Marble Falls, its upstream lake. Photos show the upstream waters of Lake Travis to have a green-brown color as opposed to its downstream waters having a light blue color under similar light conditions. The lake clarity has declined in Lake Travis over the past 25 years from 30 feet to 12 feet.

The final comment presented to those attending the work session was that economics work in favor of land use of effluent. Crops can be grown that have the potential for super profits; Christmas trees, turf grass and horticultural plants grown with effluent make real money! Additionally, it is less expensive to build and operate a sewage treatment plant for irrigation than it is one for lake/river discharge.

WE REQUEST THAT THE LCRA BOARD POLICY BE TO PROMOTE LAND USE OF EFFLUENT FOR THE ABOVE-STATED REASONS.

COLORADO RIVER POLLUTION:

We think you will find the enclosed report "A RACE AGAINST TIME: THE THREAT TO THE COLORADO" interesting and well researched. It was prepared by The Hill Country Foundation which is funded by several Austin civic leaders including John Scanlan. Mr. Scanlan, you may remember, has offered his legal services to the PLTA free of charge at the Texas Water Commission hearings relating to the Marble Falls permit application. He is conducting a superb and brilliant job for us! We wish to express our sincere thanks to him once again.

FUND-RAISING OFFER BY SAFEWAY STORES:

Please save all your Safeway Grocery Receipts and forward these to us once you have accumulated several hundred dollars worth of purchases. Safeway will pay one percent of the gross amount to non-profit corporations. This is a most generous offer by Safeway and it applies to any of their stores. We would love to have your receipts--just send to: The Protect Lake Travis Association 253 Venture Leander, Texas 78645

TREASURER'S APPEAL:

Success is expensive. During the last six months, the PLTA has spent substantially all of its funds fighting various permit renewal applications. Our phenomenal success is due to our ability to retain the finest in professional experts and attorneys and, of course, to our wonderful volunteers!

In order to continue to fight for clean water, we need money. We expect that legal costs and professional fees will run \$15,000 to \$20,000 in the next year, at a minimum. Most of this will be used for paying expert witnesses to appear before the hearings of the Texas Water Commission.

Your support has been tremendous and is most appreciated. We need you continued support and assistance in whatever denomination is possible for you.

IN ADDITION

to routine expenses, we have paid for well-qualified experts in the following amounts:

Lake Water Quality (Eutrophication, nitrogen/phosphorus loading and algae growth)	\$ 4,251
Land Use of Effluent (System designs, selection of suitable land and water balance calculations)	\$ 3,075
Health Hazards in Lake Waters (Virus flow-through in sewage treatment plants, virus survival in lakes and diseases caused by water-borne virus).	\$ 1,312
Sewage Treatment Plant Design (Cost to build & operate a treatment plant for discharge to the lake and for discharge to the land)	\$ 5,447

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION
253 VENTURE
LEANDER, TEXAS 78645**

Yes, I care about the Highland Lakes, and would like to become a member of the PLTA.

- [] Here is my annual membership fee of \$10
- [] Here is my contribution of \$ _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____

Home Phone: _____
 Work Phone: _____