

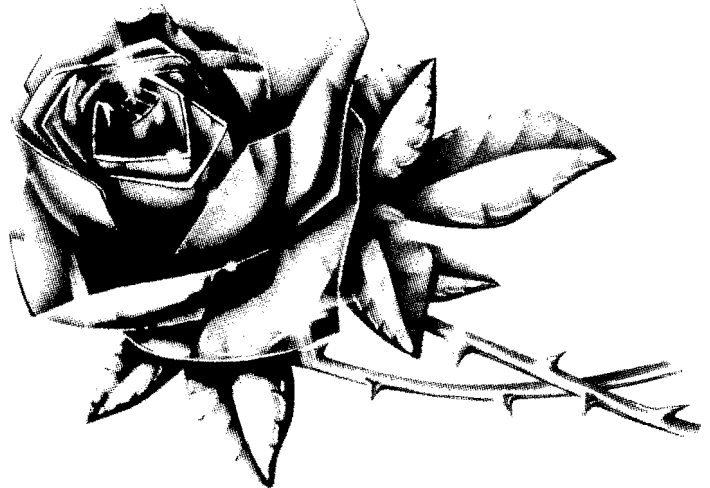
# BULLETIN

## THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 6

WINTER 1984/1985

# Thanks to you!



### Important Contributions Help Clean Lake Goal

The Protect Lake Travis Association needs your tax deductible contribution NOW to continue the fight to keep the Highland Lakes clean.

Thanks to a hard-working board and dedicated members, PLTA has been able to hold off sewage discharges into the Lake Travis watershed. Other articles in this issue describe the work that has been done. It has required significant legal expenditures, and will continue to do so in 1985.

The Association appreciates contributions of any size. All contributions are tax deductible, as PLTA is a tax exempt

corporation under I.R.S. Code Section 501(c)(3).


We have had several contributions of \$500-\$1,000, as well as \$100. Our 1984 contributors include the Austin Yacht Club, the D. C. and L. M. Reed Estate, Blake Mitchell, Doak and Marilyn Worley, John Brandenberger, Kenneth Fossler, Duane Fossler, Martin Schwarzwaldner, Walter Demond, Carl Kirsch, the Lakeway National Bank, Schneider Laundry, and the Lake Travis Cruising Association.

~ Mail your contribution today and get a tax deduction for 1984!

### CONTRIBUTION AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS

Yes! I care about the Highland Lakes.

Here is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ALSO 

Here is my/our membership fee(s).


Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! I care about the Highland Lakes.

Here is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ALSO 

Here is my/our membership fee(s).

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION, 8400 MoPac, Suite 304, Austin, Texas 78759.

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## Irrigation Better Than Discharge But Not Enough Land

Development poses many threats to the lakes. PLTA has encouraged developers to use irrigation to dispose of treated effluent, rather than discharge into the lakes.

There are several advantages to this method: First, the fertilizer grows grass and trees rather than algae. Second, the irrigation land (at least) will not be paved over and contribute to urban runoff pollution. Third, the land will form a green area on which folks can rest their eyes or exercise their legs. We have supported this approach as the best available.

Inadequate irrigation land may become a chronic problem with new permit applications. The Department of Water Resources does not seem to have adequate or consistent guidelines for calculating the effluent expected or the land necessary to receive it. Consider the two RV parks within sight of each other across the lake: One has 500 sites and is asking for an 80,000 peak flow permit. The other has 1,000 sites and has received a 68,000 gallon peak permit. When calculating the evaporation rate of the land, it is assumed that alfalfa (one of the thirstiest plants known) is planted instead of the native plants or hill country-hardy grasses that would actually be there.

Holding pond capacities are based on the yearly average flow instead of the highest anticipated: The Gregory permit requires "14 days at the average flow" of effluent storage. Because of low winter use, the average flow is only 17,000 gallons per day. That (17,000 x 14 = ) 238,000 gallon pond would be filled by 4 days of summer effluent. This coming year, we will be asking the TDWR for uniform guidelines appropriate to our difficult soils and environmentally sensitive location.

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## Point Venture II

PLTA board members have filed a protest over the design of the Point Venture II request for a permit to dispose of sewage by irrigation on a golf course. Approximately 1,000 new units are proposed. The protest was primarily over the issues of effluent holding pond location and the quantity and rate of irrigation. The protest sought to avoid both a Lakeway-type runoff from holding ponds and inefficient treatment and runoff from over-irrigation.

Currently the holding ponds are to be located in water traps and in a large pond sufficiently protected from runoff during storms. The engineering firm Haynie & Kallman has agreed to limit irrigation to 2,400 gallons per acre per day.

## Northwest Land Plan Adopted

On December 6, 1984, the Austin City Council made a historic change in the way the City handles growth by adopting a "Land Use Guidance System" for Northwest Austin. The plan boundaries encompass the entire Lake Austin watershed north of the Lake and west of Loop 360 and that portion of the Lake Travis watershed from Mansfield Dam northwest to Sandy Creek. The plan establishes a target population for the area and provides commercial and employment opportunities to support that population, while comprehensively addressing environmental, transportation, and utility service issues. The plan was adopted as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan and all subdivisions, zoning, and other permits from the City must be in compliance with its provisions.

The main elements of the "Northwest Area Land Use Guidance System" include the following:

- limitation of residential densities to a maximum of 2-3 units per acre on the flat slopes, especially the Jollyville Plateau, while severely restricting density elsewhere;
- limitation of commercial and office uses to the 620 corridor from Comanche Trail to U.S. 183, as well as a few key intersections;
- restrictions of gross floor area for commercial and office development of no more than 25% of the square footage of the tract;
- prohibition of industrial uses;
- limitation of all development to slopes of less than 15%; and,
- specification of roadway widths necessary to support the planned growth in the area.

The Northwest Area Plan is the beginning of the development of a comprehensive land use plan for the entire City of Austin and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction. Limited purpose annexation and zoning will also be forthcoming to provide additional land-use control. For information on the Northwest Area Plan or further planning efforts, call the Department of Planning and Growth Management at 448-0944.



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# PLTA in 1984

This has been a year of research and development for lake concerns. The PLTA has worked to define and publicize the nature of pollution threats from urban runoff as our watershed continues to develop. The problem is serious: For each 5 point increase in the percentage of impervious cover, the pollution loading in the lake roughly doubles. A condominium project with 50% cover will generate 1,000 times as much phosphate pollution as would the open land. That is more than those same condominiums would introduce by piping their treated sewage into the lake.

People do not yet understand that later developments will create considerably more pollution than have existing ones. With impervious cover now under 10% around the lake, a new development may not cause much addition to the pollution loading. If development continues and impervious cover nears 30%, that same development (or a new one) will be causing 16 times the pollution loading as before. That is because the pavement is now getting help from its friends to move more runoff faster toward the lake with heavier concentrations of filth. You can already see these effects mounting on Lake Austin.

What are needed are tight limitations on impervious cover for new development (18% on residential lots, 30% on commercial) and greater attention to landscaping and engineering all properties (yours too) to hold and absorb rain rather than channel it off. A terraced lawn or flower bed is a much better neighbor than a cactus garden sheeted over with plastic and

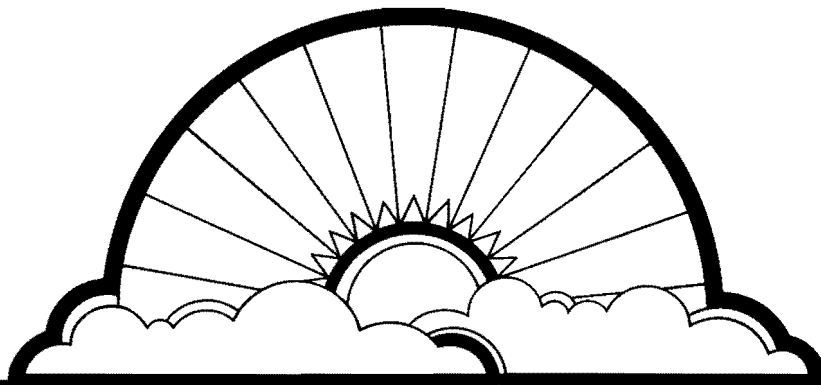
sloped toward the road. A brick patio or board deck is better than a concrete patio. You will notice the difference in the reflected summer sun in your air conditioning bill.

PLTA has pressed this issue with legislators, with the LCRA, with developers and with the Department of Water Resources. Where Austin has expanded into our watersheds, we have pressed our case with them. Of all agencies with the capability of acting, they are so far the only ones to do so. The new Northwest Growth Plan limits cover to 50% on commercial sites and forbids development on slopes over 15%. The cover limitations are inadequate and contain loopholes but are substantially better than anything in place elsewhere in our watersheds. We tip our hat to Austin for genuinely trying to do some good, and ask those who would rather not have Austin involved to help us get another agency to do better.

1984 also marked the birth of the Protect Lake Buchanan and Inks Lake Association. They have had a tremendous first year, successfully opposing a sewage discharge into Buchanan and joining us in pleas before the LCRA and TDWR. Between us there is hope for the Highland Lakes yet! Our vice president, Cecil Laws, is on their board. For information, contact him or President Robert Root, Route 1, Box 249, Buchanan Dam, Texas 78609. Welcome neighbor, and congratulations!

This coming year we must continue to press for runoff protection, for better water quality standards and for tighter irrigation requirements. We have so little time and so much at stake.

Taylor Ollmann  
President, PLTA



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## Irrigation Discharge Permits

In the last six months, one sewage discharge permit has been granted in the Lake Travis watershed and several more have been requested. Thanks to PLTA's successful petition in 1983, none of them are permits to discharge into the lake itself or its streams. Instead, the treated sewage must be used to irrigate land set aside for the purpose, and not allowed to flow into the streams.

The Texas Water Commission in October granted a permit to Buddy Gregory et al to irrigate up to 68,000 gallons of sewage per day from an RV park they are developing on Lake Travis between the mouth of the Pedernales and Paleface Park. The original permit required 11.4 acres of irrigation land. With any significant rainfall, the land would be unable to receive the 5-6 inches per month of effluent without saturating and running off.

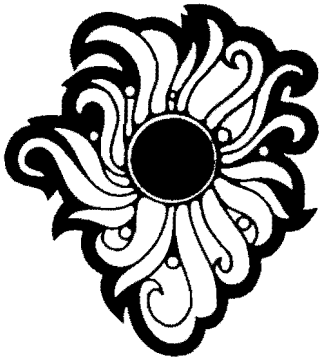
Work by PLTA resulted in the developer's agreement to increase the irrigation land to 19.4 acres. This we hope will provide an adequate margin of safety.

A second RV Park (Treasure Resorts, also at the mouth of

the Pedernales) is applying for a permit to irrigate up to 80,000 gallons per day of effluent on 10.5 acres. Their original plan, accepted by the state engineer, called for 8 acres and a 500,000 gallon holding pond. PLTA requested that the design be tested under adverse weather conditions: that rainy month we get every three or four years. The computer model showed that with a 10.5 acre irrigation area plus 3 extra emergency acres, it would take a year to dispose of the accumulated sewage and a 1,800,000 gallon pond to hold it. That explains where the 10.5 acres in the current application comes from.

PLTA opposes a design with so little margin for error or for the unexpected. A hearing will be held on Treasure Resorts on January 17 in Room 119 of the TDWR Building at 1700 North Congress. Persons wishing to protest should file them in writing 8 days in advance. Contact James Larkins, Hearings Examiner (512) 475-2711 for details and changes.

A third and larger irrigation application is from Mitchell Energy and Development for a new condominium development at Point Venture described elsewhere.



## PLTA Board Members

Two new board members were elected by PLTA members at the annual membership meeting last summer. They are Tom Buckle, Attorney, and Dohn Larsen, law student. Board members re-elected were Dr. Taylor Ollmann, President, Cecil Laws, Vice-President, Harriet Alexander, Secretary and Bulletin Editor, Janet Hagy, Secretary, Hilda Ollmann, John Strickland, Jr., and Jay Powell.

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### THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION

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