



## CTWC APRIL 2012 Newsletter

If you are a 'Headlines Only' reader, this is for YOU:

CTWC MARCH HEADLINES: *"March 1: No Lake Water for the Rice Fields"; "House Natural Resources Committee Explores Drought Options"; "46<sup>th</sup> TX Legislative Conference Looks at Drought and the TX Economy"; 'Caylor Quoted in TX Monthly Story'; "CTWC Sponsors Bass Fishing Tournament on the Highland Lakes April 21-22"; and "Sen. Fraser to Address the CTWC April 26 Meeting".*

For the REST of YOU, see the details in the Newsletter below.

FACT: We won a temporary reprieve with the TCEQ Emergency Drought Modifications on draining our lakes this year!

FICTION: We won the battle, and we can relax!

FACT: Until our Lower Colorado River basin finds new water resources, and we have operating ranges for the two lakes, Central Texas will remain in a Water Crisis!

### CTWC Members and Friends,

Since our **March 1, 11:59 pm 850,000 AF deadline**, which MOST of us stayed up and monitored, CTWC has been in a run. Now that we are past the March 1 deadline, we are focusing on **Education** by speaking to various organizations and groups, reaching out to other areas where water is vital, and **Fundraising**. To compete effectively, we have a water attorney, Monica Jacobs, Kelly Hart; a hydrologist, Dr. Barney Austin, Intera; and other specialists such as lobbyists to help us achieve our goals! We are also focusing on **Legislation** to help us solve this water crisis dilemma.

Our **CTWC meeting on March 7 at the Oasis on Lake Travis** was designed to provide avenues of input from our membership in areas of research, fundraising, membership, public relations, and politics. A special thank you to our Oasis host, Beau Theriot, for his gracious and generous contributions!

On **March 15, Burnet County Commissioner's Court hosted the Burnet County Water Issues** meeting with the Lakes stakeholders and LCRA Board members John Franklin and Ray Gill. Judge Klaeger welcomed everyone and each stakeholder and Board member introduced themselves, followed by a Q&A session from the audience.

The **LCRA Board met on March 20 and 21** in Austin. CTWC attended those meeting, which were short and noncontroversial, a welcome change for all of us! LCRA hosted a thank-you luncheon for the members of the WMP Stakeholders Advisory Group after the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Many attended and enjoyed an excellent lunch.

On **March 22, Rep. Alan Ritter, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, sponsored an interim hearing on the Texas Drought**. The lineup included the State Climatologist, folks from TCEQ, TWDB, LCRA (Becky Motal, who reported on straws in the lakes...), Texas Farm Bureau, Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Rice Farmer Robby Cook, leaders from El Paso, Brownsville Utilities, Dow Chemical, Sierra Club, Editor of Water Salination Report, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, San Antonio Water System, Harlingen Irrigation District, Texas AgriLife Research, Nature Conservancy, and a few others...quite a line up, and CTWC

was there, even though we were not asked to testify, and Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber was denied the opportunity to address the economic impact of the drought on Lake Travis. Perhaps the most compelling testimony centered on water supplies in the state. Interim Charge 3 centered on desalination, and we have provided the data on our website, [www.OurWater-OurFuture.com](http://www.OurWater-OurFuture.com). We were pleased that members of the House Natural Resources Committee are openly exploring ALL avenues, not just the usual; we thank them for their vision and leadership!

**March 22, The Barstow Speaker Series hosted by Colorado River Foundation with “A Candid Conversation of the Future of Water in Texas”.** CTWC attended. The panel included Andy Sansom, Texas River Systems Institute; Ed Vaughn, Water Development Board; Becky Motal, LCRA; Laura Huffman, The Nature Conservancy. Panel shared their views on various topics including “Texas has a Water Plan and the Legislature needs to have strong leadership and prioritize items in the Plan and take action, reservoirs are not the complete answer.”

**March 22 -23<sup>rd</sup>, the 46<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Conference was held in New Braunfels** and CTWC attended and made many valuable contacts. Topics presented gave a snapshot of the issues facing Texas this year, but the most important included the economic impact of the drought. FINALLY, it appears as though people other than CTWC and Central Texans are looking at the economic issues and recognize the value of sound water policies and plans!

**March 26 was the second planning meeting of the Strategy Committee of Region K.** Even though Jo Karr Tedder and Janet Caylor are alternates to Region K, and our representatives Doug Powell, Lake Travis, and Bill Neve, Burnet County, are on that committee, it was decided that alternates would not be allowed to attend the strategy sessions. Although questions were asked about the rationale, and concerns about fairness and open meetings were raised, the committee, co-chaired by James Kowis, LCRA, and Jim Barho, Burnet County, evidently voted to keep the status quo. Disappointed and frustrated, but with strengthened resolve, Janet and Jo will attend all meetings allowed AND will continue to represent the lakes at all times! **The next regular Region K Meeting is April 11, and it is open to the public (and committee alternates).**

**Janet Caylor was quoted in the April 2012 Texas Monthly magazine article, A Grain of Doubt, by Kate Galbraith.** CTWC has contributed to other articles of Kate’s and was pleased that her objective eye sees some of what we have been seeing. See excerpts from the article below.

**April 21 – 22 will be the 1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CTWC BASS FISHING TOURNAMENT!** We decided another good way to get the word out was to host a fishing tournament. The Kick-Off will be Friday night in Marble Falls at the River City Grill, and Saturday, Team will be fishing at Lakes Buchanan, LBJ, Travis, or Austin. Sunday’s championship will be on Lake LBJ with a \$10,000 championship prize! Go to [www.tt1.com](http://www.tt1.com) or contact Lake Buchanan Fishing Guide, CTWC Tournament Organizer and radio host Ken Milam at 325-423-0083.

**April 26 CTWC Meeting on Lake Travis. [Sen. Troy Fraser](#) will be our Guest Speaker. Save the date, more info to come.**

It is important to understand exactly what is needed to protect this economic engine that is Central Texas. The Highland Lakes attract tourists (nature lovers, bird watchers, kayakers, fishermen and women), residents and businesses because of the unique beauty of our waters. Between extreme drought and questionable water management policies, our lakes have become endangered, and we do not have the luxury of sitting back and waiting for rain. We have to be educated, proactive, and work with all organizations, groups, and government agencies to find solutions. We are growing strong in numbers and expertise, thanks to all of you!

Check out website [www.OurWater-OurFuture.com](http://www.OurWater-OurFuture.com) and visit [www.Facebook.com/centraltexaswatercoaliton](https://www.facebook.com/centraltexaswatercoaliton)

The Texas Monthly on newsstands now carries an article “A Grain of Doubt” written by Kate Galbraith of the Texas Tribune/NYT. The article is quite good, and frames the historical perspective as well as the disparity in pricing, usage, and the dramatic changes since the dams were built.

## Letter from Matagorda County

### [A Grain of Doubt](#)

For more than 75 years, rice farmers in Matagorda County and elsewhere along the Gulf have shared the waters of the Colorado River with urban residents in the Hill Country. But with city centers booming and an almost-certain drought ahead, the state is being forced to choose between a water-intensive crop and a water-intensive population.

by [Kate Galbraith](#)

Excerpts from the article:

“As more people moved to Central Texas, though, the demands on the lakes increased. And so, in 1989, after haggling by the City of Austin and others over water resulted in a court settlement, LCRA officials forged an arrangement. Towns and cities would have guaranteed water, and the farmers’ supply would be deemed “interruptible” in a bad drought it could slow or cease. To date, however, that has never actually happened.....In fact, rice farmers used more lake water in 2011—452,000 acre feet—more than at any other time since 1999, and nearly three times as much as Austin.” ....

“It’s emotional right now, because we are in such a serious drought,” said Becky Motal, the agency’s general Manager.....She offered largely careful comments about the proposed plan and dodged my question about whether it made sense anymore to cultivate water-intensive rice when Texas cities are growing so quickly. She would say only that rice farmers “sense that there’s going to be less and less water available for them over the next several decades.” ...

“I hopped in a 21 foot motorboat for a ride around Lake Travis with Janet Caylor...As we rode, she pointed out the now grim trappings of lake life....Had the farmers not been given water last fall, Lake Travis might be thirteen feet higher, and the public boat ramp at Mansfield Dam would still be open, Caylor figures. **She was frustrated with the new LCRA plan, because even though it would help the lakes during a drought, it still allowed for levels to drop too low. The farmers could no longer be the dominant power brokers, she felt. Some of them “are telling the LCRA, ‘You need to dance with the one who brung you,’” she said, “But this is not a high school prom.”**