

LCRA Water Management Plan Process Concludes,

Lakes Travis and Buchanan Stakeholders Form Central Texas Water Coalition

Highland Lakes Stakeholders and Constituents join forces to affect change in water management policies and to create new water supplies for drought-torn Texans

Lakes Buchanan and Travis— In May of 2010, the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) formed the Water Management Plan Stakeholders Advisory Committee to assist in updating the Water Management Plan. The committee consists of 16 individuals representing diverse interests: Rice Farmers, Environmentalists, Firm Customers, and the Lakes.

After a year of meetings, and the realization that the Lakes are not viewed as the anchor for communities and businesses, but as buckets of water for LCRA customers, the Lakes Team decided to form the Central Texas Water Coalition (CTWC).

The Central Texas Water Coalition will bring together concerned individuals and groups to constructively address water issues of the Lower Colorado River Basin. Our primary mission is to advocate for the preservation and conservation of the Highland Lakes' water supply and water levels for the benefit of human health, safety, and recreation, and to preserve the Highland Lakes' role as an irreplaceable economic engine for the State of Texas.

Tourism has taken a front seat in driving the economy of the Highland Lakes' counties. Hundreds of thousands come to Burnet, Llano, and Travis County each year, taking advantage of the excellent boating, fishing, camping, cabins, lodges, Inns, spas, and dining opportunities. The CTWC offered a qualified consensus vote on the next WMP, but is aggressively addressing the areas that were not supported by the rest of the WMP Advisory Committee. These include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate Economic Valuation of Lake System: Assessment of the economic contribution of the Highland Lakes system on the Texas economy, as well as the economic impact of low lake levels is crucial and must be an integral part of planning efforts.

Create Additional Sources of Downstream Water Supply: The Region's population is projected to more than double over the next 60 years. In order to support existing and projected demand, additional downstream sources of water must be identified and brought online as quickly as possible.

Ensure Basin Management in Accordance with 1989 Adjudication: It is our belief that the LCRA's water management under this system of allocation and curtailment borders a violation of the 1989 court adjudicated findings which state that the supply of stored water to non-firm, interruptible commitments should be interrupted or curtailed to the extent necessary to satisfy all existing and projected demands for stored water to all firm commitments.

Adjust Water Management Policies to Appropriately Manage Risk: Refine modeling and planning values for firm water projections and other factors influenced by hydrologic variability, such as inflows and evaporation. Address the "water available to sell" by the LCRA.

Reevaluate Drought Conditions: Reevaluate and change the criteria for declaring a "drought worse than the drought of record."

Representing Lake Buchanan are Jo Karr Tedder, Rusty Brandon, John Williams and Rick Albers. Representing Lake Travis are Janet Caylor, Kerry Spradley and Dorothy Taylor. Our Team includes David Lindsay, Tom Harrison, and Bill Aydam. In addition, Sen. Troy Fraser, Sen. Kirk Watson, Burnet County Judge Donna Klaeger, Burnet County Commissioner Bill Neve, and Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber have been instrumental in the evolution of CTWC.

CTWC will provide speakers to any and all organizations to share this urgent message: The water we have in the Lakes is precious, limited, and must be protected; there is no new water; and your voice can help protect our water and our future.

The Central Texas Water Coalition is an umbrella 501(c)4 non-profit organization with plans to unite the 2 million people who live in Central Texas in accordance with our mission statement. The website is www.ourwater-ourfuture.com.