Lake Medina Conservation Society

P.O. Box 390, Lakehills, Texas 78063

LAMCOS Newsletter
FALL 2022

LAMCOS General Membership Meeting

The Board of Lake Medina Conservation Society is pleased to announce the upcoming General Membership Meeting that will take place **Saturday, October 29th at 2 pm at the Lakehills Community Center, 11225 Park Rd. 37, Lakehills. We hope you will be able to join us.**

Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District

The Bandera County River Authority (BCRAGD) General Manager, Dave Mauk, will give a presentation on the current drought conditions. Also, he will give an update on the BCRAGD-BMA litigation settlement agreement.

Save Medina Lake Committee

The Save Medina Lake committee (SML) is very excited about the upcoming LAMCOS/SML membership meeting on Saturday, October 29th and look forward to sharing the information that we've compiled and researched as well as the actions we've taken over the past 3 years since our last meeting. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic challenges we have continued our efforts to Save Medina Lake!

Since our last meeting, there has been a lot of changes to Medina Lake. In January of 2019 and before the pandemic, Medina Lake was full at 254,823AF. At the time of this article's printing, Medina Lake is near empty at 20,000AF (7.8% full). Why is history repeating itself with BMA draining Medina Lake twice in the last 10 years? There are several factors for the "WHY" –

1. **>75% of the water released from Medina Lake is wasted.** It takes >4 gallons of water to deliver 1 gallon of water to farmers/property owners from BMA's mostly **dirt-lined** ditch canal system.

2. **BMA's TCEQ Drought Contingency plan is meaningless** as it allows BMA to drain the lake dry with absolutely NO CONSEQUENCE. TCEQ has approved this plan. See below.
3. Central Texas in general has received less rain fall this past decade than previous decades. Because of this the lake has not been able recover from BMA's wastefulness as in past decades.

Charts from BMA's TCEQ Drought Contingency Plan, Page 3 Section XII & Page 4 Section XIII

Stage	Requirements for Initiation	Requirements for Termination
1 – Mild Water Shortage	Water Storage in Medina Lake is equal to or less than 78,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.	Stage may be rescinded when Water Storage in Medina Lake exceeds 78,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.
2 - Moderate Water Shortage	Water in Storage in Medina Lake is equal to or less than 66,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.	Stage may be rescinded when Water Storage in Medina Lake exceeds 66,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.
3 – Severe Water Shortage	Water in Storage in Medina Lake is equal to or less than 56,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.	Stage may be rescinded when Water Storage in Medina Lake exceeds 56,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.
4 – Critical Water Shortage	Water in Storage in Medina Lake is equal to or less than 46,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.	Stage may be rescinded when Water Storage in Medina Lake exceeds 46,000 acre-feet for 30 consecutive days.

Stage	Target Reduction	Water Use Restrictions
1 – Mild Water Shortage	Achieve 10% reduction in average daily water demand.	Business Manager will contact wholesale water customers to discuss water supply and/or demand conditions and will request the wholesale customers initiate voluntary measures to reduce water use.
2 - Moderate Water Shortage	Achieve 20% reduction in average daily water demand.	Business Manager will contact wholesale water customers to discuss water supply and/or demand conditions and will request the wholesale customers to provide progress reports on reduction of water use.
3 – Severe Water Shortage	Achieve 30% reduction in average daily water demand.	Business Manager will contact wholesale water customers to discuss water supply and/or demand conditions and will request the wholesale customers to seek alternate water supplies.
4 – Critical Water Shortage	Achieve 40% reduction in average daily water demand.	Business Manager will assess the severity of the problem and identify actions needed and undertake necessary actions including termination of water supply and prepare a post-event assessment report.

By Definition, Medina Lake is at Stage 4 and the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) states the following; *"Business Manager will assess the severity of the problem and identify actions needed and undertake necessary actions including termination of water supply and prepare a post-event assessment report."* Medina Lake was at 46,000AF on May 12th however BMA did NOT terminate the water supplied to their district. Subsequently, SML filed a complaint with TCEQ and asked them to ensure that BMA follow their own DCP and close the gates. In the response from TCEQ it is stated: **"TCEQ does not have the authority to require entities to implement their DCPs in times of drought. Each entity is responsible for overseeing implementation and enforcement of their DCP."**

In other words, the State of Texas has no authority to ensure that Drought Contingency Plans which are printed on TCEQ's letterhead are followed. However, the response from TCEQ indicates that the State of Texas is concerned about that the DCP is posted in BMA's office, but not at all concerned about if the plan is followed.

SML intends to make sure that state politicians are aware of this meaningless policy and will lobby for changes to make sure the state has the right to enforce policies pertaining to a political subdivision of the state.

Along with researching BMA's plans such as their Drought Contingency plan, SML has continued our efforts of monitoring and tracking how much water is released

- from *Medina Lake into Diversion Lake.
- from Diversion Lake into BMA's ~312 miles of antiquated dirt ditch irrigation canal system which is in a severe state of dis-repair.

AND of the total amount of water released from Medina Lake, how much is actually sold. During the meeting we will share how shockingly little of the water released from Medina Lake is actually sold to the farmers/property owners in BMA's district.

Another ongoing effort of SML's has been to analyze **BMA's Water Sales in 2020 and compare the results to our analysis of BMA's Water Sales for 2009 and 2017. As with 2009 and 2017 analysis', there were MANY surprises. One such surprise is BMA sold water to a small subdivision's HOA in Lytle.

After posting this information on Save Medina Lake's Facebook page, one of BMA's directors stated that the HOA grew "hay, corn and cotton". Last fall when Medina Lake was at 30% full, several SML members investigated the subdivision and found no signs of growing "hay, corn and cotton". The only signs our members found were the ones below posted in front of 2 full lakes in the middle of the subdivision about the HOA's recreational rules for resident's use of the lakes and surrounding common grounds. There were no signs of agricultural activity, at least not around the 2 lakes.

BMA argues that Medina Lake was not built for recreational purposes, but they sell water to private gated recreational ponds and lakes. The water in Medina River is an important recreational resource which must be kept in Medina River and Medina Lake for the benefit of the public. All citizens of the state must be allowed access to

this precious resource, and it should not be limited to a few gated and private ponds and lakes.

SML is fortunate to have several pilots who regularly fly over the Medina Lake dam to determine if the ***valve(s) are opened or closed and one pilot has added flying over BMA's irrigation canal system to help with our investigation. From his flights he has also captured aerial footage of numerous lakes/ponds along the canal. SML plans to show part of this footage during the meeting.

Another effort that SML has been involved in is locating 2 wells on the south side of the lake for USGS to install a "level troll monitor" for tracking and recording the effect of the lake going dry on domestic surrounding wells from the lake. We would like to thank Phyllis LaLonde for reaching out to the community to locate the wells. <u>USGS would like to install 1 more monitor in a well on the north side of the lake that is shallow and not used day to day.</u> Please send an email to water@SaveMedinaLake.com if you know of a well that could potentially be used.

SML realized early on when we accepted the challenge to Save Medina Lake that it would not be an easy task. However, we are just as committed today as ever to reach our goal of making permanent change so that one day Medina Lake is NEVER DRAINED DRY AGAIN.

It is only thru your support that all of this has been possible. We look forward to seeing and talking with you on Saturday October 29th at the Lakehills Civic Center.

*Because BMA does not measure how much water is released from Medina Lake as all other lakes do in Texas, SML has developed a mass balance calculation to estimate the amount of water released/day.

**House Bill 872 was been passed into law in 2021 therefore SML can no longer receive extracts of BMA's water sales.

*** Flying over the dam is necessary because BMA refuses to communicate to the community when a valve is opened or closed and how much water is released

Lake Medina Conservation Society

Please complete the below form and provide a donation if you can.

LAMCOS, P.O. BOX 390, Lakehills, TX 78063.

Name_____**Date**_____

Mailing Address_____**City**_____**State**_____**Zip**_____

Phone_____**Email**_____

Donation $_____

All donations go to support the work and expenses of Lake Medina Conservation Society and the Save Medina Lake Committee. There are no paid employees.