

Newsletter, Summer 2015

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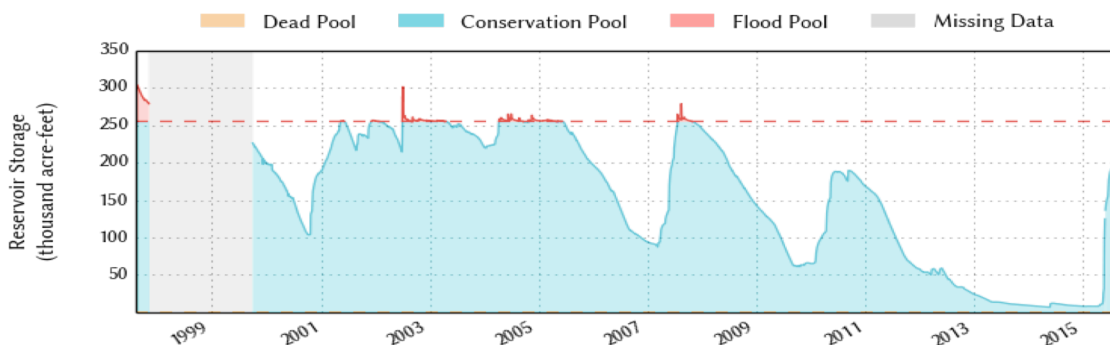
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Medina Lake is 71.5% full as of 2015-08-30



State of Texas Permit System

The State of Texas considers surface water from rivers and lakes to be the property of the citizens of Texas. Surface water used from Lake Medina is permitted by the state through the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) which also monitors and records the data. These permits function on a calendar year of January 1 thru December 31 of each year

The TCEQ permits for Bexar-Medina-Atascosa Counties Water Control Improvement District No. 1 (BMA) are approximately 46,000 acre feet per year for irrigation and 20,000 acre feet per year for municipal usage for SAWS (San Antonio Water System).

TCEQ monitored water usage data for the past 10 years is as follows:

Year	BMA Permit #2130-300	SAWS Permit #2130-301
2005	41,737 Acre Feet	10,235 Acre Feet
2006	45,686 Acre Feet	7,574 Acre Feet
2007	10,775 Acre Feet	0 Acre Feet
2008	32,806 Acre Feet	3,503 Acre Feet
2009	35,010 Acre Feet	9,298 Acre Feet
2010	17,103 Acre Feet	4,387 Acre Feet
2011	42,074 Acre Feet	9,892 Acre Feet
2012	16,301 Acre Feet	6,854 Acre Feet
2013	0 Acre Feet	1,630 Acre Feet
2014	0 Acre Feet	0 Acre Feet
Total	241,492 Acre Feet	51,743 Acre Feet

- 2014 Medina Lake was at less than 5% capacity.

Update: Save Medina Lake Committee

Contributed by Rachel Mulherin

Since the Lake Medina Conservation Society membership meeting last January, the Save Medina Lake committee has had a very busy and productive year on efforts to protect Medina Lake's future. As reviewed at the membership meeting, **the committee's 1st goal for the year** was to inform the communities surrounding the lake on the committee's conclusions after 2 years of research and analysis. We have concluded that:

- The drought is the reason why the lake is not full
- Low rain & inflow volumes are why the lake had not recovered until recently
- **However, the reason why the lake was DRY for over 3 years and not just low**, is because the gates at Medina Lake dam were improperly managed and left open, effectively draining the lake from 100% in 2007 to 25% in 2009 to 6% April 2013.

What is the Solution? We believe that proper management (opening and closing as needed to release permitted water) of the gates on Medina Lake will significantly reduce the possibility for this disaster to happen again. Our analysis clearly shows that the lake would have been in much better shape throughout the drought period if such management had taken place. We also believe that flow meters should also be installed on the Medina Lake gates so that exactly how much water is released can be determined.

Save Medina Lake's first event was held in March where a Neighborhood Walk took place at the Lakehills Civic Center to share our findings with participants. Neighborhood Walk participants then shared the findings with their family, neighbors and friends. At the walk we also initiated a petition to show support for our efforts by the community and we are proud to say that we have reached over 5000 signatures!



Our goal is 10,000 signatures so if you have not already done so, we ask that you go to www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-medina-lake to sign the petition.

We have also made good progress towards our 2nd goal of informing our local and state leaders on Medina Lake's disastrous situation. With assistance and collaboration from our partner organization Central Texas Water Coalition in Austin, we participated in the 84th Texas Legislation Session and provided testimony to the Senate Natural Resources committee on the devastation a dry Medina Lake has had to all stakeholders – irrigation users, the community, and citizens around the lake and beyond.

This led to meetings in Austin with House Representative Andrew Murr and Senator Troy Frazier's offices and the Senate Natural Resources director, Tara Rejino to debrief on Medina Lake's situation. To our surprise, these state leaders did not know the extent of Medina Lake's devastation.

Next we met with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and we were encouraged to learn that a water conservation plan did exist for Medina Lake and Bexar Medina Atascosa Counties W.C. I. D. #1 (BMA) is scheduled to install flow meters on Medina Lake dam by 2017. Currently, no one including BMA knows how much water is actually released from Medina Lake when one or both valves are open. However, Save Medina Lake's calculations based on the valve manufacturer specifications indicate > 200,000 acre feet/year (80% of the lake volume) is released from the smallest valve @ 50% open when there is water in the lake. If both valves are open @ 50% then > 500, 000 acre feet/year is released.

Now that Medina Lake is ~70% full, our 3rd goal of ensuring improved water management changes are made by the BMA has increased in urgency. As we have experienced historically time and time again, Medina Lake can be drained from 100% to 25% in 2 years' time.

Over the past few months the Save Medina Lake committee met with the BMA and attended their monthly board meetings to voice concern over past operations and to request operational changes for the future. We also made it clear to the BMA board that the Save Medina Lake committee has never challenged the permit granted by the State of Texas allowing BMA to divert up to 66,000 Acre Feet per year for irrigation and municipal purposes. Rather the opposite, without supplying water for irrigational purposes there would not have been a Medina Lake. Although disappointing, it was not a complete surprise that the BMA rejected the request to immediately install flow meters on Medina Lake dam. Here's a link to the video on YouTube when Save Medina Lake presented at the July BMA board meeting - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLZ80bxfcwo>.

So our committee is now working thru the media urging state and local politicians to apply pressure on the BMA to make these water management changes. We are also actively monitoring Medina Lake's gate status and Diversion Lake level. Again to our disappointment, one valve on Medina Lake dam has remained open since June 10th with the exception of 1 week when it was closed and Diversion Lake has been maintained ~917' above sea level for > 4 weeks during this time. According to an URS Engineering study undertaken by BMA, the amount of water loss increases exponentially as Diversion Lake is maintained higher than 913.5'.



Although we had hoped that the BMA would make water management improvements around operations of the dam as well as maintaining the optimum water level in Diversion Lake, it is recognized that this is a fundamental shift for them and the shift will take time and pressure. Moving forward, the BMA must acknowledge Medina Lake's water is owned by the citizens of Texas and it is the people of Texas who have permitted the BMA the right to 66,000 acre feet / year. BMA must also learn to view Medina Lake's water for the precious commodity that it is and understand that it requires conservation for the good of all – the community, the irrigators, the business owners. It is no longer acceptable in the 21st century to simply leave Medina Lake gates open releasing unknown amount of water until it is drained dry.

Now that our surrounding communities and our local / state leaders are more knowledgeable about Medina Lake's situation, we are optimistic that with knowledge, **NEEDED CHANGE WILL HAPPEN!**

BCRAGD Litigation Against BMA WCID #1

The Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District (BCRAGD) is involved in a lawsuit with the Bexar Medina Atascosa Counties WCID # 1(BMA).

BCRAGD seeks a declaratory judgement that BMA WCID # 1 has no jurisdiction in Bandera County to do the following:

1. Inspect private or public water wells
2. Enforce any jurisdiction or rules over groundwater or surface water
3. Investigate any alleged water well violation; or
4. Promulgate any rules relating to groundwater; or
5. Exercise any rights as a Water Control and Improvement District

The case is scheduled for hearing on September 25, 2015 at 9am, at the Bandera County Justice Center, 3360 State Highway 173 North, Bandera, Texas in front of the Honorable Judge Rex Emerson.

If you can, please attend the proceedings to show support for the citizens of Bandera County against the encroachment of BMA WCID # 1 and to learn more about this case. If you want updates against any court date changes please send a note to sloanmedina@cs.com.

BCRAGD Opposes Flying L Guest Ranch Groundwater Variance

The Flying L Guest Ranch has applied to the Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District for a variance to produce 2096 acre-feet of groundwater per year from their wells on their golf course. They are currently producing about 200 acre-feet per year. The 2096 acre-feet of groundwater is approximately 10 times the water pumped for the City of Bandera.

The hearing date for this permit request is pending. Anyone interested in this matter can request that the District notify them of any scheduled hearings. To request notification of any hearings either call the District at 830-796-7260 or send an email request to dmak@bcragd.org.

It is time to renew your membership for 2015.

If you have had any address changes or are sending in your membership dues, please complete (PRINT) and mail to LAMCOS, P.O. BOX 390, Lakehills, TX 78063. Dues are \$10.00 per person or \$15.00 per family. Any and all donations are appreciated.

Name _____ Date _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State ___ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

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