

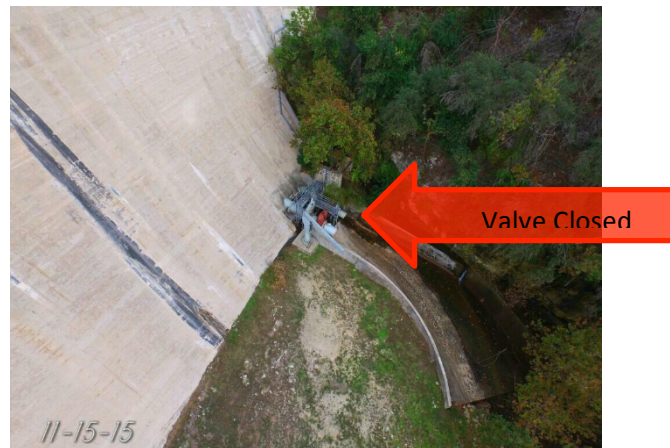
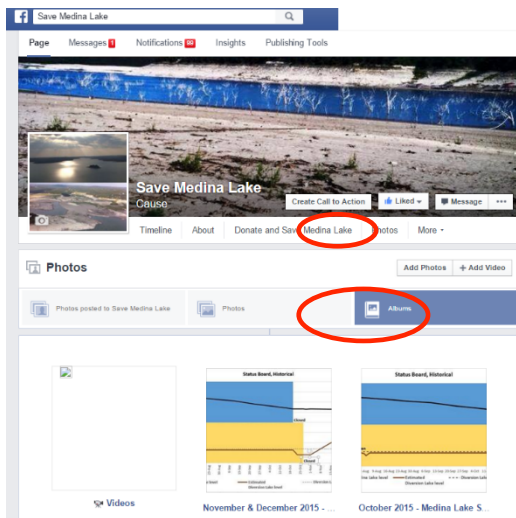
Update: Save Medina Lake Committee

Contributed by Rachel Mulherin

The Save Medina Lake committee is excited to say the 2nd half of 2015 was just as busy and productive as the first **AND** we are seeing several positive results from our activities!

One of our 1st significant activities last summer was to purchase a drone. Since the Bexar Medina Atascosa Water and Control District #1 (BMA) does not keep records on when the valves on Medina Lake are opened and closed and by how much, one of the primary purposes of the drone is to monitor and chart Medina Lake, Diversion Lake and the Canal System statistics that affect Medina Lake's water level. The drone has been very effective, and we are convinced BMA has changed the way they manage the two lakes due to the fact that they know their operation is being monitored.

Check out our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Savemedinalake>) where all pictures and statistics are published on a monthly basis in the Photos and Albums section.



Speaking of Facebook, we are also excited that Save Medina Lake's followers/friends have increased to over 13,000. Facebook has turned out to be an increasingly powerful tool for sharing information and upcoming events with the public. It is also providing a forum where Save Medina Lake's diverse group of followers (community members, farmers, past and present people who live at the lake, local and state leaders ...) are having discussions on issues, misconceptions, and improvements for Medina Lake. Facebook followers are also posting pictures of their friends and families and children spending time together at Medina Lake showing how important the lake is to our lives.

During the 2nd half of last year, the Save Medina Lake committee was also involved in another effort to clear one of our founding members from accusations of illegally practicing geoscience and engineering by the BMA. Our committee "went to bat" last September at a Professional Geoscientist board hearing in Austin where our member was cleared of all charges. The incident was well covered in the Media and BMA was criticized publicly for this unacceptable pursuit of a citizen executing his constitutional rights. The Professional Engineering board cleared our member of all charges as well.

Save Medina Lake "went to bat" again when we were forced to contact the Texas Attorney General's office after BMA consistently refused to follow the Open Public Records Act. The Attorney General's office contacted

the BMA general manager and instructed him on how to make information from a governmental agency such as BMA readily available to the public.

As last year's legislation session came to a close, Save Medina Lake began preparing for the next cycle by meeting with Texas Senate District 24 candidates to share information about Medina Lake and the issues it faces. We specifically emphasized the lack of transparency by the governmental agency, BMA. Each candidate that we met with was SHOCKED that a dam of this size did not have metering to determine how much water is discharged nor a website to publish basic information such as discharge rates about its operations. We are in continued dialog with House Representative Andrew Murr on water management improvements at Medina Lake. Coincidentally after several such dialogs with Representative Murr, the BMA recently announced their intent of implementing a website in the near future.

As with the previous 2-1/2 years, the committee has continued researching and increasing our knowledge on:

- BMA's Permit to divert water for municipal and irrigation purposes
- BMA's Water Conservation Plan and BMA's Drought Management Plan
- San Antonio Water Systems (SAWS) contract with BMA
- Medina Lake system including Diversion Lake, Irrigation Canal system and Siphon2 (diversion point for SAWS)
- Aquifer recharge rates from Diversion Lake

And this knowledge has proven invaluable during discussions with SAWS. SAWS is in a unique position to greatly influence BMA since SAWS provides ~80% of BMA's income. We also shared with SAWS our current observation (by flying our drone) where the Diversion Lake dam is overtopping while the Medina Lake valves and the Irrigation Canal gates at Diversion Lake dam are closed. This observation suggest there is enough leakage around and under the Medina Lake dam to deliver permitted water WITHOUT opening the Medina Lake valves. As we have learned, approximately 200,000 acre feet/year (~80% of the lake's total volume) is discharged from Medina Lake when the smallest valves is just 50% open.

In closing, we believe that Save Medina Lake's actions are POSTIVELY influencing water management changes by BMA. To our knowledge this is the 1st time in history, the Medina Lake valves are **CLOSED** to conserve water in Medina Lake! BMA did close the valves in April 2013 however the lake had been drained to 6% by that point. Along the lines of conserving water, BMA also recently announced a change in their water delivery policy where the irrigation canal gates will not be opened until > 500 acre feet of water orders have been made. In the past, the canal gates were opened for any order, regardless of the size. In addition, BMA's new policy also requires that the irrigation users to order and prepay for the water they intend to use at the beginning of the year. This is expected to significantly reduce the demand for irrigation water for the entire year.

These are major and fundamental changes from a governmental agency that has historically operated in a less than transparent way, suggesting no accountability to the public. Save Medina Lake looks forward to another productive year in 2016 with real and positive change for Medina Lake.

Thank you for your continued support. And if you have not already done so, please sign the petition showing your support. Our goal is 10,000 signatures and we are well on our way with 6607 signatures.

www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-medina-lake

Thank you again,

The Save Medina Lake committee