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OUR MISSION: LAMCOS is to serve the interests of Medina Lake and surrounding environs. This is generally agreed to mean, but is not exclusive of, the promotion of the general welfare of area residents, local businesses and those who use the lake. In addition, the purpose shall include pursuit of a minimum conservation pool level and encouragement of use of the lake as a valuable recharge feature of the Edwards and the Trinity Aquifers.

LAMCOS HISTORY

Historically, San Antonio and others in the South Central Texas area have depended solely on the huge Edwards Aquifer for their water supply. In the early 1990's however, a Federal Judge declared there must be a diminution of usage from the Edwards in response to a SIERRA Club suit demanding protection for an endangered species in San Marcos. Thus began the search by large users for a surface water supply to replace the groundwater source that was being used. Eyes of a thirsty urban area were turned on Medina Lake and the BMA, who owns the only permit to remove water from the lake. SAWS and Bexar Met, the major water suppliers to the San Antonio area offered to buy water from BMA (the lake). At that time, BMA's 1920 permit from the state was for irrigation only.

LAMCOS incorporated in 1993 to fight a proposed change in the permit for BMA from 66,000 acre feet of water per year for irrigation only to the same amount for irrigation and municipal uses. LAMCOS' and Bandera County's opposition was because BMA had averaged taking only about 36,000 acre feet per year and the lake level was about 1/2 full on average. Thus the use of the rest of their allotment would mean greatly lowered lake levels. Resistance to the permit change led to a judicial court case that lasted 6 years and ended in victory for BMA. Their permit was changed, allowing them to use 46,000 acre feet per year for irrigation and 20,000 acre feet per year for municipal purposes. BMA now has a contract with Bexar Metropolitan Water District for the purchase of Medina Lake water.

It became obvious that LAMCOS should continue to exist as an organization that would attend to the interests of the lake itself and the inhabitants and other users of the lake. The situation in the world of water had become such that water purveyors and others were anxious to get their hands on Medina Lake water. LAMCOS' purposes became those of protecting the quantity and quality of the water in Medina Lake, with an emphasis on achieving a conservation pool level below which municipal sales would be denied and on promoting the lake itself as a valuable recharge feature for the Edwards Aquifer and the Trinity Aquifers. This would, hopefully, lead to delivery of the lake water through the aquifer rather than through wasteful surface water delivery.

Medina Lake is one of the few lakes in Texas with no statutory authority for its protection. A court judgment proved that BMA has no jurisdiction over the lake. Bexar Met, their customer, attempted through legislation to obtain such jurisdiction of both the lake and the watershed above the lake. Bandera County, other counties, water districts and LAMCOS opposed that bill and it was defeated.

In an effort to find a local solution to the problem of lack of authority, LAMCOS approached Springhills Water District in Bandera County, petitioning them to activate their role as a River Authority. This was a designation given them by the Texas legislature but never used. Springhills responded to our request, hired a water attorney, researched the matter and agreed to resume what powers were available to them to protect surface waters in Bandera County. They now are the Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District (BCRAGD). LAMCOS continues to monitor and assist these governmental bodies in seeking statute-making powers and making rules for the lake.

LAMCOS persuaded Medina and Bandera Counties and the 2 county water districts to fight a state permit which would have allowed the dumping of a development's sewer treatment plant effluent directly into Medina Lake. This was a successful effort. Also more restrictions were put on the developer whose plan was to then spray the effluent near the lake.

LAMCOS collected samples of the waters of the Medina River below the Bandera Sewerage Treatment Plant and had it tested independently to determine that it was not degraded. LAMCOS also attempted to aid in the negotiations between the Flying L Golf Course and the city to have the effluent sold to the golf course and thus diverted from the river altogether.

LAMCOS has presented many educational programs to the members and the public.

- The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has spoken on several occasions about their two studies on Medina Lake.
- USGS also led members on a geological field trip around the lake to observe aquifer outcroppings.
- The Regional Water Planning Districts (J and L) in which the lake falls have made presentations on their efforts to determine water usage for the next 50 years and its impact on both the lake and the aquifers supported by the lake.
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Dam Safety Division reported to a large group after the 2002 flood on the dam and the studies they did on the dam.
- One LAMCOS meeting involved the presence of those running for Texas Legislature in this area. They were informed of our concerns about the lake and were questioned about their stance on matters involving our interests.
- Dr. Robert Mace of Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) presented his computer model of predicted usage of the Trinity Aquifer (which is Bandera County's only water source) in the coming 50 years. As a result local water district's officials attending the meeting were able to provide him with valuable additional data.

LAMCOS plans to continue promoting these programs to our members and to the public.

LAMCOS CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Medina River Protection Fund, Inc. (MRPF)

In 2012 LAMCOS will sponsor the twelfth annual Medina River Cleanup, Covering 50 miles of the Medina River above the lake. Canoeists and Kayakers from throughout the state come to Bandera for the event, as well as volunteers from LAMCOS and organizations across the county.

To ensure that the river cleanup continues each year the Lake Medina Conservation Society has set up the Medina River Protection Fund, Inc. 501(c)(3) Endowment Account. It is a permanent fund that cannot be used for anything but cleaning and protecting the Medina River.

Waterfront Property Owner's Association (WPOA)

LAMCOS assisted in starting an organization of property owners to fight BMA's efforts to claim their homes below the 1084 elevation line. The Waterfront Property Owner's Association is separate from LAMCOS and represented landowners affected by this threat. In 2005 a mediated settlement was agreed to.

United States Geological Survey (USGS) Science Studies

LAMCOS continues to connect and cooperate with local governments and with the county water districts in working together to fulfill our mutual goals. We are planning to seek more studies to be done by the USGS on the river, lake and its recharge into the Trinity and Edwards aquifers. We will continue to work on establishing the proper authority for the lake.

Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District (BCRAGD)

Since 2005 LAMCOS has focused its efforts on promoting a broad based science program which includes surface water monitoring of the Medina River and Medina Lake. Toward that goal the Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District has contracted with USGS to conduct gain-loss studies on the Medina River. These studies seek information on the areas where the river loses water to the aquifer and where it gains water from the aquifer. Surface water is also tested throughout the county for e-coli levels and reported to local newspapers.

Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

LAMCOS monitors TCEQ water permit reports and publishes them in the "LAMCOS Newsletter". The reports detail each year how much permitted water is removed from Lake Medina by BMA and Bexar Met.

LAMCOS also monitors TCEQ waste water permit applications for Bandera and Medina Counties to insure that none are approved for discharge into Lake Medina.

Flood Warning System

For the past decade LAMCOS has promoted the installation of an early flood warning system on the upper Medina River. The purpose is to provide occupants on the river and lake advance notice of severe flooding.

In 2011 the Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District contracted with USGS to install an early warning gauging station near the town of Medina. The system allows Bandera County governmental agencies and citizens to receive flood warning alerts. Information is available at no charge on the USGS website.



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