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LCRA TO LOWER LAKE LBJ AND LAKE AUSTIN IN EARLY 2017

Drawdown will allow maintenance, help fight aquatic vegetation

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AUSTIN, Texas – The Lower Colorado River Authority will lower lakes LBJ and Austin for about six weeks in early 2017 to give lakeside property owners an opportunity to repair and maintain docks, retaining walls and other shoreline property. The drawdown also will aid in curbing the growth of nuisance aquatic vegetation such as hydrilla and Eurasian watermilfoil.

“It’s been years since we’ve lowered any of the Highland Lakes,” said John Hofmann, LCRA executive vice president of Water. “Property owners need to maintain their boat docks and perform other maintenance, and I’m pleased our water supplies have been replenished enough that a drawdown is possible. Our lakes are nearly full, and conditions in the basin are better than they have been in several years.”

Lake LBJ: LCRA will lower Lake LBJ about 4 feet from about Jan. 2, 2017, to Feb. 13, 2017. The drawdown will take three to four days. Water released from Lake LBJ for the drawdown will be captured and held downstream in Lake Travis until it is needed by customers.

To refill Lake LBJ, water will be moved downstream from Lake Buchanan beginning about Feb. 10, 2017. The water to refill Lake LBJ is equivalent to about 1.07 feet in Lake Buchanan, but the impact on Lake Buchanan could be reduced by rainfall or additional inflows to lakes LBJ or Buchanan.

A permit is not needed for dock repairs performed on Lake LBJ during the drawdown, but all work must comply with LCRA’s [Safety Standards for Residential Docks on the Highland Lakes](#). Maintenance dredging, debris removal and repair work on existing retaining walls during the drawdown can be done under LCRA’s permit with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but the work must be registered with LCRA. Registration forms are available:

- Online at lcra.org/lakelowerings.
- By calling LCRA Water Quality Protection at 512-578-2324.
- In person at the LCRA Western Maintenance Facility, 2643 Wirtz Dam Road, Marble Falls, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Burning debris in the lakebed is not allowed.

For more information on work allowed on Lake LBJ during the drawdown, visit lcra.org/lakelowerings or contact LCRA Water Quality Protection at 512-578-2324.

Lake Austin: At the City of Austin's request, LCRA will lower Lake Austin about 10 feet during that same time period. Lowering Lake Austin may take two to three weeks, depending on conditions.

LCRA will not actively lower Lake Austin, but instead will allow levels to gradually fall by not sending water downstream from Lake Travis to replace water used by customers that draw water from Lake Austin or downstream, or water released to meet environmental flow requirements in the lower river or Matagorda Bay.

To refill Lake Austin, water will be moved downstream from Lake Travis beginning about Feb. 9, 2017. The water to refill Lake Austin is equivalent to about 8 inches of water in Lake Travis, but the impact on Lake Travis could be reduced by rainfall or additional inflows into lakes Austin or Travis.

In the City of Austin's request to LCRA, the city said the drawdown would provide an opportunity to stay ahead of nuisance vegetation growth on Lake Austin, allow property owners to assess and repair bulkheads and boat docks, and allow a City of Austin fire station to maintain its boat ramp.

Property owners must secure authorization from the City of Austin to perform work on structures in or along Lake Austin during the drawdown:

- For minor repairs of existing docks, removing sediment beneath the footprint of existing docks or repairing up to 25 percent of an existing bulkhead, contact the City of Austin Development Assistance Center at One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road, Austin, or 512-974-6370.
- For new dock construction, or to add, change or replace structural components such as load bearing beams, piers or pilings, an approved site plan signed and sealed by a licensed professional engineer is required. For more information, including the application requirements, contact the City of Austin Development Assistance Center at One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road, Austin, or 512-974-6370; or call Liz Johnston, Watershed Protection Division, at 512-974-2619.

The drawdown on Lake Austin in early 2017 is expected to be the last opportunity for a lowering on Lake Austin for several years because of an upcoming LCRA project to strengthen and modernize floodgates on Tom Miller Dam. The lake will remain within its normal operating range during the gate rehabilitation project for safety and accessibility, and to minimize delays during the anticipated five-year project.

Unforeseen circumstances, such as floods or power emergencies, could prompt LCRA to change or cancel the scheduled drawdowns if necessary to pass water through the Highland Lakes and protect public safety. Equipment and tools should not be left in the lakebed overnight and should be removed from the shoreline when not in use.

LCRA last lowered Lake LBJ in 2008, Lake Marble Falls in 2009, and lakes Inks and Austin in 2011. No drawdowns occurred in 2012-2016 because of the drought.

About LCRA

The Lower Colorado River Authority serves customers and communities throughout Texas by managing the lower Colorado River; generating and transmitting electric power; ensuring a clean, reliable water supply; and offering access to nature at more than 40 parks, recreation areas and river access sites along the Texas Colorado River, from the Hill Country to the Gulf Coast. LCRA and its employees are committed to enhancing the lives of Texans through water stewardship, energy and community services. LCRA was created by the Texas Legislature in 1934. For more information, visit lcra.org.

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