

*From: Llano County Commissioner Peter Jones:*

*Please see below an announcement from the Lower Colorado River Authority website on February 7, 2019 advising that Lake LBJ is scheduled to begin refilling on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and conclude by Feb 27<sup>th</sup>. This is a change from the previous extended refill schedule of March 18<sup>th</sup>. This decision by LCRA has created many concerns and hardships to constituents who are working to rebuild lost docks and clear debris due to the flood as well as safety concerns of the hazards in the lake that have not been removed or properly marked.*

*I was not consulted on this decision to refill the lake early and do not support it due to the considerable hardship and safety concerns it creates. Should you wish to contact LCRA to express your concerns or have questions please call LCRA Water Quality Protection at 512-578-2324.*

*Peter Jones*

*Llano County Commissioner Precinct 1.*

### **LCRA announcement**

Lakes LBJ and Marble Falls being temporarily lowered

*Update: On Feb. 7, LCRA announced the refill of Lake LBJ is scheduled to begin on Feb. 24 and conclude by the end of the day on Feb. 27. The refill of Lake Marble Falls is scheduled to begin on March 18 and conclude by the end of the day on March 21. [Read the news release.](#)*

LCRA has temporarily lowered lakes LBJ and Marble Falls to assist lakeside property owners in recovering from recent historic flooding along the Colorado and Llano rivers. The drawdown makes it easier for residents to remove debris, dredge and maintain or repair docks, retaining walls and other infrastructure.

Lake LBJ has been lowered about 4 feet and Lake Marble Falls about 7 feet. The drawdown began Dec. 30.

LCRA lowered Lake LBJ from its normal operating range of 824.4 to 825 feet above mean sea level (feet msl) to about 820.8 feet msl. LCRA can only lower the lake about 4 feet without risking impacting operations at the Thomas C. Ferguson Power Plant on Lake LBJ. In addition, drawing the lake down lower than 820.8 feet msl would hinder TxDOT's work on the RM 2900 bridge that was destroyed during the October floods.

Lake Marble Falls was lowered from its normal operating range of 736.2 to 737 feet msl to a range of 729 to 730 feet msl.

The water released from lakes LBJ and Marble Falls totaled about 26,000 acre-feet and caused Lake Travis to rise a little more than a foot. The U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers has allowed LCRA to temporarily store up to 1.3 feet of water from the drawdown in the flood pool of Lake Travis, up to a lake level of about 682.3 feet msl, from Dec. 30 through April 1.

Water supply and hydroelectric operations are continuing during the drawdown. Lake levels are measured at the dam that forms each lake. Water levels may be higher and fluctuate more at the upper ends of the lakes when water is being passed through the lake.

Unforeseen circumstances such as floods or extended power emergencies could prompt LCRA to change or cancel the drawdowns. Equipment and tools should not be left in the lake unattended and should be removed from the lakebed when not in use.

## Debris removal

Individual property owners are responsible for removing debris on their private property. LCRA is responsible for identifying and marking hazards in the main channel of the river/lake.

LCRA donated \$100,000 each to Burnet and Llano counties to assist in flood cleanup and recovery. It is up to each county judge to decide how that money will be spent.

Under state law, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is responsible for removing debris in the river, including the portion of the river encompassing the lakes. Section 11.097 of the Texas Water Code provides:

*Sec. 11.097. REMOVAL OF OBSTRUCTIONS FROM NAVIGABLE STREAMS. (a) On its own motion or on written request from a commissioners court, the commission shall investigate a reported natural obstruction in a navigable stream caused by the accumulation of limbs, logs, leaves, other tree parts, or other debris. If making the investigation on request of a commissioners court, the commission must make its investigation not later than the 30th day after the date on which it receives the written request from the commissioners court. (b) On completion of the investigation, if the commission determines that the obstruction is creating a hazard or is having other detrimental effect on the navigable stream, the commission shall initiate action to remove the obstruction.*

Even though it has the statutory responsibility to remove debris, TCEQ has not received funding from the Texas Legislature for this purpose. The Legislature is currently in session and is considering

legislation (and required funding) to address the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Harvey and related flooding. LCRA will support efforts to secure funding for TCEQ's debris removal function. It is essential to note that debris removal from navigable waters is a statewide issue and not limited to the Highland Lakes portion of the Colorado River.

## Safety responsibility

LCRA continually seeks to identify and mark hazards to navigation in the main channel of the Highland Lakes portion of the Colorado River. However, boaters and others should never rely solely on hazard buoys.

Each person has a responsibility to look out for themselves and their family members. No water body is without risks. That was true before the flood and continues to be true today. No stream, river or lake in Texas is entirely safe or immune from potential hazards.

The decision to recreate in any portion of the Colorado River, including the Highland Lakes, is one that each person must make upon an assessment of the situation and the use of good judgment and common sense.

## Permitting requirements

Residents and property owners who want to perform dredging, remove debris or work on existing retaining walls during the drawdown must register their projects with LCRA.

REGISTER NOW

Work may be done under LCRA's lakewide permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, if it meets the permit requirements. Download the lakewide permits and permit notices below. A permit notice must be posted at the worksite.

- [Lakewide permit for Lake LBJ](#)
- [Permit notice for Lake LBJ](#)
- [Lakewide permit for Lake Marble Falls](#)
- [Permit notice for Lake Marble Falls](#)
- [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit](#)

A permit is not needed for dock repairs, but all work must comply with the [Safety Standards for Residential Docks on the Highland Lakes](#).

Burning in the lakebed is not permitted.

If you have questions or need more information, please call LCRA Water Quality Protection.