



Hydrilla and Potential Lake Austin Drawdown Update

Austin Watershed Protection and Austin Water

Climate, Water, Environment, and Parks Committee Meeting | July 15, 2026



Hydrilla Update

Hydrilla

- Invasive aquatic plant
- Can grow about an inch per day
- Depth of 20 feet
- Spreads out when it reaches top
- Not many things consume it except grass carp
- Tubers are hard to kill because they are buried in sediments and resist freezing and drying
- Impedes recreational use
- Found in Lake Austin (not Lady Bird)

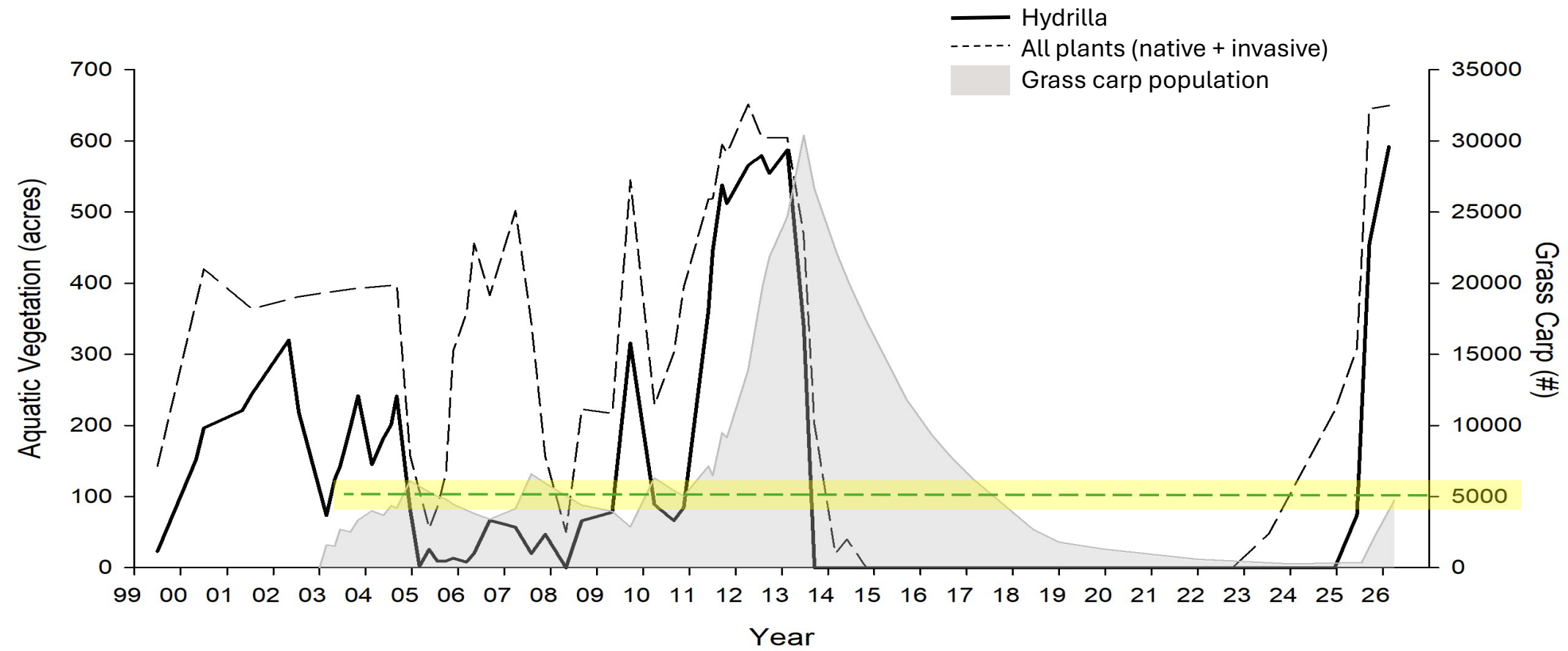


Sterile Grass Carp

- Lake-wide, long-term strategy
- Unable to reproduce...each fish is checked by vendor
- Live 10-15 years
- Stock 10” to 12” to minimize predation risk
- Carp can eat year-round
(but they do slow down in winter)
- Sterile Grass Carp stocking
 - July 2025 – 358 in Bull Creek, Dry Creek
 - November 2025 – 1,955 at Mary Quinlan Park and Bull Creek
 - May 2026 – 2,790 at Jessica Hollis Park and Walsh boat ramp



Sterile Grass Carp Update



Vegetation Survey Update



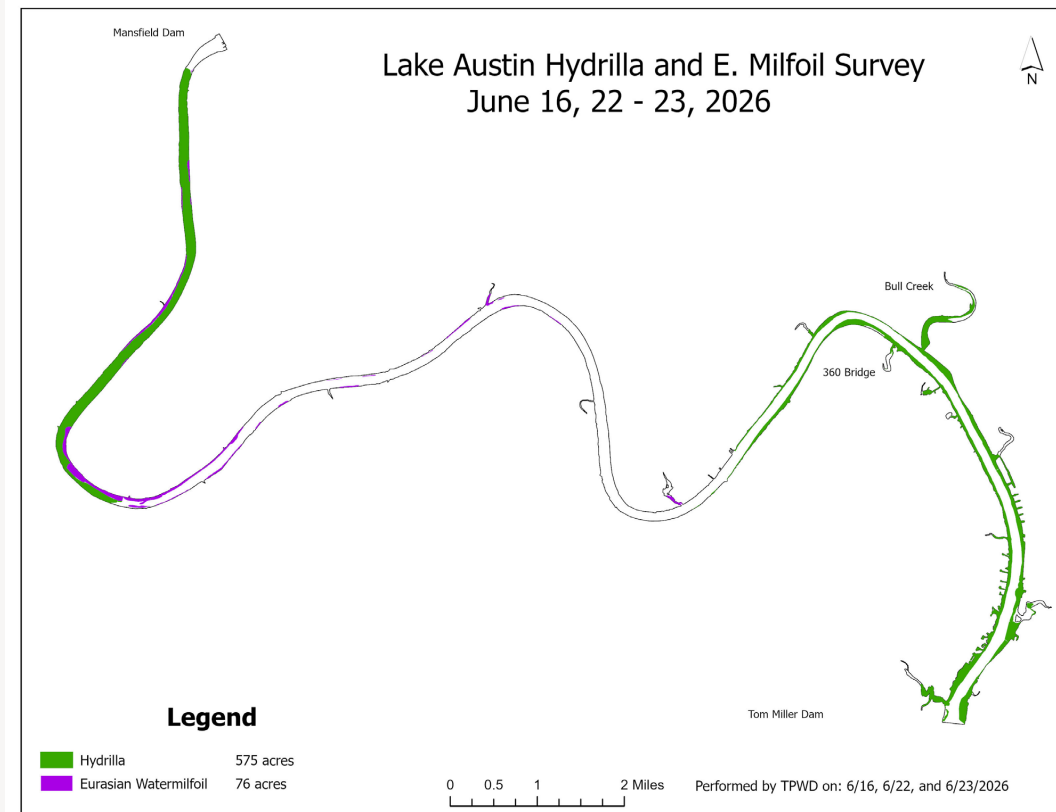
- June TPWD survey is the most current
- Slight decrease in hydrilla
- TPWD will perform the next survey in the fall (as is usual)

Current data:

- Hydrilla: 36% of the lake
- Eurasian Watermilfoil: 4.8% for total
- Total Invasive Vegetation: 40.6%

February data:

- Hydrilla: 37% of the lake
- Eurasian Watermilfoil: 3.6% of the lake
- Total Invasive Vegetation: 40.6%



Data courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Next Steps

- June survey shows baseline information for current growing season
- Sterile carp can only be added when conditions are favorable (not during very hot or cold months)
- Staff are developing an updated model, bringing in more information to fine tune stocking rates
- The June and upcoming fall survey will tell us what the next stocking rate will be



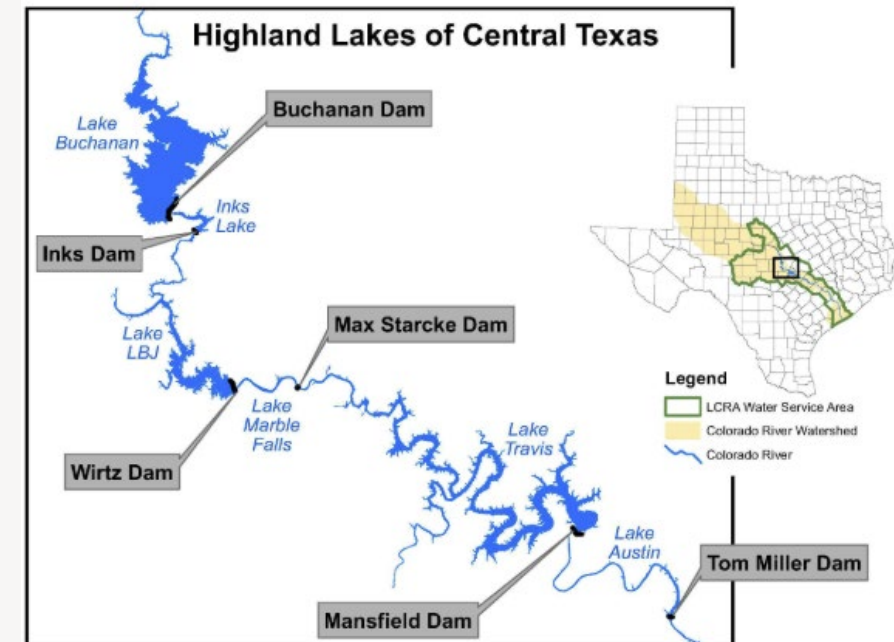


Potential Lake Austin Drawdown Update

Austin-LCRA Partnership



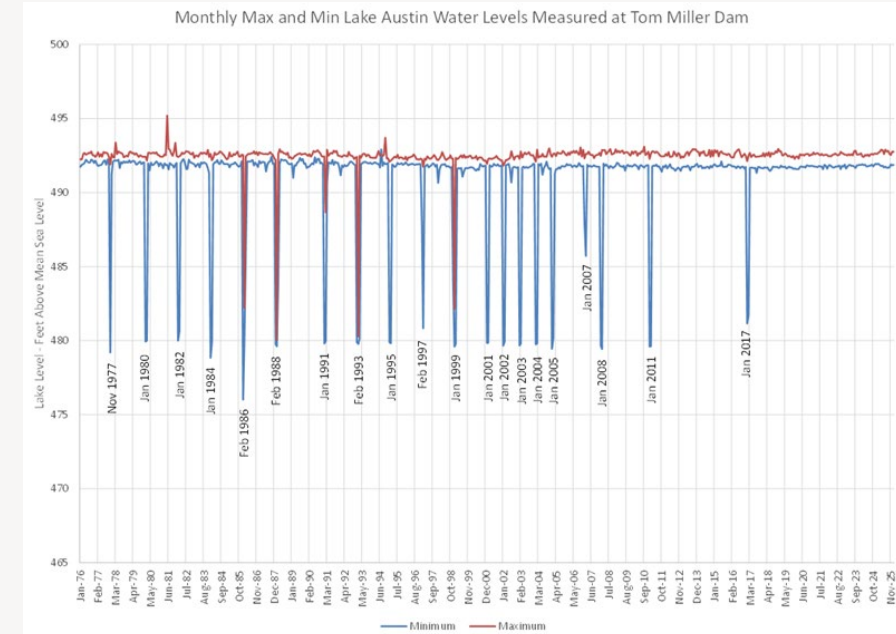
- Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)
 - Operates Lake Austin upstream/downstream dams
 - Manages river operations, generates hydropower
 - Conducts drawdowns on pass-through lakes (Inks, Marble Falls, LBJ)
- City of Austin
 - Owns Tom Miller and Longhorn dams
 - Operates Longhorn dam (Lady Bird Lake)
 - Takes water from Lakes Travis and Austin for drinking water
- Austin-LCRA Water Partnership
 - Austin Water serves as the City's representative
 - Austin Watershed Protection participates on water quality



Lake Drawdowns – Overview



- Purpose
 - Ease of access for property maintenance, including docks, bulkheads, dredging and debris removal, for private and city-owned property, as needed
 - Potential for temporary management of nuisance aquatic vegetation
- Last Lake Austin drawdown was in early 2017
- Proposed process
 - Austin Water initiates request to LCRA, dependent on:
 - Community requests
 - Drought status
 - Costs
 - Not more often than every four years
 - Provisions outlined in letter agreement between Austin and LCRA



Lake Drawdowns – Mechanics



- LCRA temporarily stores inflows in Lake Travis
 - Requires U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval
- Lake Austin is lowered as water is used locally and released for downstream uses from Tom Miller dam
 - Approximately 1 foot per day
 - Approximately 10 feet below normal
- Lake Austin is refilled with the water stored in Lake Travis
 - Approximately 2 feet per day under normal conditions
 - Refill could potentially be faster in a flood or other emergency conditions
- Total duration of 6 weeks under normal conditions
 - Full lake to refilled lake
 - October-November 2026



Hula Hut and other businesses during 2017 Lake Austin drawdown
Four Points News

Shoreline Maintenance Work



- Dredging of boat slips
- Reconstruction of concrete bulkheads
- Other minor maintenance of existing docks
- Shoreline cleanup (above ground hydrilla, garbage, etc.)
- Some work will require permits



Potential Agreement Provisions



- Flood control
 - LCRA may refill the lake at any time if needed for flood control
 - Flash flooding may cause rapid refill
 - To the extent possible, the City and LCRA will provide notice to permittees
- Lost power generation – cost reimbursement
 - Component A: Base cost of \$7,000 for LCRA power revenue impacts
 - Power revenues are used to fund dam maintenance and improvements
 - Component B: Contingency for extreme event occurrence or extraordinary conditions
 - ERCOT may call for additional power generation during local or statewide emergency
 - Call may include significant increase in power prices
 - Rare during October and November

Potential Agreement Provisions



- Adaptive plan to reduce time in component B
 - Monitor weather and refill the lake as quickly as possible in advance of severe weather or other emergency conditions
 - Develop plan to mitigate impact of extraordinary conditions on LCRA's hydroelectric generation revenue and establish parameters in agreement
- Through permitting process, provide notice to property owners not to leave tools and equipment unattended in the lakebed, require acknowledgement of risk and emergency contact information

Stakeholder Communications



- Lake Austin Stakeholder Group established in Spring 2026
- Group composed of 12 stakeholders representing varied interests including lake use for recreation and boating, anglers, homeowners, businesses, and environmental constituents
- Stakeholder Group meetings with City Staff:
 - May 6 and June 25
 - Next meeting being planned for late summer/early fall
- Topics discussed at prior meetings include hydrilla updates, potential for a Lake Austin drawdown and process, including permitting



Next Steps



- July 15 Climate, Water, Environment, and Parks Committee (CWEP)
- July 2026 – Continue negotiations with LCRA on letter agreement
- July/August 2026 – Update Mayor and Council on lake drawdown status
- August 2026 – Communicate lake drawdown status to stakeholders and public



Questions