

The Lake Merritt Institute

LAKE TRASH REMOVAL, FOUNTAINS, EDUCATION, LAKE MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

568 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610; 510/238-2290; lmi@netwiz.net

VOLUME IX

"TIDINGS" - AUGUST, 2004

ISSUE VIII

STATUS OF STORM WATER FILTERS: Geographical information systems are wonderful. The City Public Works Agency has one, and it produced the attached map showing two existing and eight proposed storm drain filter locations. Also shown are the area served by the filter locations, and (darker line) boundaries between filter watersheds. As shown on the legend, the following filters are in the planning stages: • 22nd Street & Valley; Webster near 20th; 26th & Valdez; and Park & Newton.

Together these four filters would prevent trash from 310 curb inlets and 488 acres from reaching the Lake. That's 10% of Lake Merritt's watershed, and a significant dent in the trash problem for which our Lake is famous. Regardless of what litterbugs did in these areas, their private garbage would not be able to reach public waters.

Filters also have been proposed for another 798 acres (17% of the watershed). They are not yet approved however, due to questions about:

- Different types of filters (but apparently only one type of filter can handle large acreages such as these, and other designs are only used for parking lots, shopping centers etc.)
- If it is worth filtering these parts of the watershed (yes - these sub-watersheds contain commercial areas and include lots of trees which produce lots of leaves which leads to lots of biological oxygen demand which leads to low oxygen for which the Lake is listed as impaired). Oh!
- Depth of the filter (1. current designs are too deep for the City's maintenance trucks (but bigger trucks are available) 2. depth could be reduced but that would also reduce the size of a storm that would be filtered without spilling trash back into the storm drain. At the current design depth, the filters would capture a storm likely to occur every six months. It would seem however, that it is better to capture a 5, 4 or 3 month storm rather than none at all).

Stage II and III Measure DD funds for are available for such filters. Let's hope we can get them installed.

WHAZIT? Our "catch of the month" was found under the old row boat house (1520 Lakeside Drive). It is about 6 inches in diameter and even though made of what appears to be copper, barnacles were growing on it. Best guess: a float from the old tide gauge located at that building. But for several years, County officials have been using a sonar device in that gauge to determine water level, and they claim it does not belong to them. Any other suggestions?



EAST BAY WATERSHED CENTER OFFERS CLASSES: The Watershed Center at Merritt College is offering several classes for creek organizations, volunteers, students and professionals in late August, September, October and November. They include: Restoration & Monitoring of Watercourses; Data Quality Management; Train the Trainer; Wildlife Gardening; Introduction to Restoration Landscaping; and Community Water Systems and Sustainable Water Use. You may enroll online at www.peralta.cc.ca.us or by calling 510-466-7368. Given the high caliber of instructors listed, you would probably learn a lot. For more information, send an Email to ecomerritt@sbcglobal.net.

NEW TYPE OF ALGAE FOUND IN LAKE: Bright green and feathery, this type of algae has not (to our knowledge) been reported in Lake Merritt before. According to *Marine Algae of California* by Abbott and Hollenberg, 1976, it most closely matches *Ulva stenophylla*, a relatively rare species found on rocks in the lower intertidal zone from Oregon to Monterey Bay.

COUNTY STOPS BACTERIAL SAMPLING: Despite continuous indications that fecal coliform bacteria levels in the Glen Echo and Trestle Glen arms of the Lake far exceed guidelines for body contact, Alameda County has stopped bacterial monitoring. Anyone care for bacterial roulette?

INSTITUTE WORK TO GO OUT TO BID: In July the City Council Public Works Committee voted unanimously to extend the Institute contract for care of Lake Merritt until May 31, 2005 during which time staff will solicit qualifications from interested firms. The committee chose this option over the staff recommended option of a three year extension. Full council approved the one year extension and solicitation of qualifications on the consent (non-controversial) calendar. So, if you are interested in removing 1,000 – 9,000 pounds of trash per month, purchasing and maintaining several aeration fountains, giving educational presentations about urban runoff and Lake Merritt, assisting the multi-agency water quality technical committee regarding oxygen impairment, water quality, storm drain filters and other issues, and coordinating hundreds of volunteers, feel free to respond when the request for qualifications is issued.



NATURAL HISTORY SERIES – Part 5, Gumweed (*Grindelia sp.*). One of our Lake's most colorful shoreline plants is shown here growing among a patch of rip-rap by the Boating Center. A native plant, it tolerates salty soil in what would normally be the upper edges of a salt marsh. Fleshy, alternate leaves with sticky buds are identifying characteristics. Other patches of this attractive perennial occur along the Lakeside park peninsula where there is no rip-rap. Perhaps, someday, more patches of natural shoreline will be established at the Lake, and we can have more gumweed.

PILOT AERATION PROJECT MOVES FORWARD: Staff and City Council have approved funds for a pilot study of a proprietary aeration project that would mix upper layers of Lake water with the bottom layers, thereby increasing oxygen levels in the lower layers (which is where the problems are located). The study may occur next spring.

FOUNTAIN WORK APPROVED: Also approved were funds to repair the electrical cable for our Embarcadero fountain (a bid has been received) and for a new (city owned) aeration fountain at Grand and Harrison (which will have to go out to bid).

The Lake Merritt Institute is sponsored and supported by the Oakland Public Works Agency and members like you.