

# THE LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE

*(Lake Trash Removal, Fountains, Education, Lake Expertise)*

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## VOLUNTEER LETTER

**AUGUST TRASH TALK:** Rain and trash levels were very similar to July: **Zero inches** of rain fell and **760 pounds** of trash were collected. **Thirty two bags** were filled by **106 people** working to clean the Lake. An unknown amount of trash was also removed by the Harvester boat.

**GLEN ECHO:** The following is modified from the poem "Echo Park" recorded by Tom Russell.

Yeah it begins up by the cemetery I think. The Glen Echo watershed begins up by the cemetery. And it keeps right on going without regard for deer or storm drains.

Somehow this watershed is like an old woman with a bad memory and a shopping basket, tolerated and forgotten. We're in the urbanized area, that's the idea. Down on the pavement in the streets.

This watershed punched in, bulldozed, divided, held like a crucifix in a death hand. This watershed bought, re-sold, bought again, and sold again.

The war is long over, Indians are all but gone. Wildlife is barely hanging on. And now real estate agents, subdividers, landlords, free way engineers, arguing this is their land. And I walk on it a while, live on it.

Out there near the Claremont Country Club, where I see young men washing SUV's on the street. And I think too of trash cans overflowing, cigarette butts and plastic bags.

To get your hold on the land, sometimes it's best to return to the shopping centers to see the parking lots, old buildings and sidewalks. I'm sure you've seen these same paved areas everywhere. And when it rains the water runs off like a flood, amidst the neon lights, banks, supermarkets, jewelry stores and boutiques.

And you know how those look. They do look good. As if you could spend all that money. Have a glass of wine and drink away the bad world.

Then it's best to return to the open creeks, the same confined, half buried creeks, stale and almost lifeless. With the young city inspector walking through, scared and looking for trouble. And the street's still littered, it has an edge that already mixes with heavy metals and grease.

You gotta to be strong in the streets to ignore this and ignore the runoff and ignore yourself. With those regulations on the books looking so good with their signatures and BMP's.

Hell who needs a storm drain filter.

125 years ago there used to be a forest with clear creeks and permeable soils. The sun seemed warmer then although this probably wasn't true. Now they take their fast food outside and walk down the street. And the wrappers lay there in the gutter, waiting to be washed downstream.

And you look around, ..... and you look around, ..., and you hardly see any creeks or redwoods. And when it rains, the water flows filthy now, all the way down to the Bay.