

LCRA's '50-Foot No Wake Zone' Rule

LCRA's '50-Foot Rule' (TPWD APPROVED) e. No person may operate a motorized watercraft on the Highland Lakes at a speed greater than the minimum speed necessary to maintain steerage - way and headway within 50 feet of the shoreline, structures, swimmers or restricted areas.

Suggested Lake Austin Ordinance:

"No person may operate a motorized watercraft on the Lake Austin at a speed greater than the minimum speed necessary to maintain steerage - way and headway within 50 feet of the shoreline or restricted areas".

LCRA's 1999 Highland Lake Task:

Hello Mr. Roddy: LCRA conducted a stakeholder input process in 1999 to develop a number of management actions to be used on the Highland Lakes to improve boating safety. The development of the LCRA 50-foot rule was part of that process. Among the 23 diverse interest groups that participated, there were several public agencies participating - including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The management actions (including the 50-foot rule) were all part of a consensus of recommendations by those stakeholders, and they were enacted for Lake Travis by the LCRA Board on January 19, 2000. The management actions were extended to all of the Highland Lakes later that year. I am not aware of any formal letter of approval by the TPWD on our rules created by this process, but they (TPWD) were a part of the consensus from our stakeholder process.

These rules were created under the authority given under Chapter 31.092 (Local Regulations), of the Texas Water Safety Act. This is likely the same authority used by the City of Austin when it imposed the ban (currently in place) on personal watercraft on holiday weekends for Lake Austin. I hope this was helpful.

Best regards,

Tim Bradle, Supervisor

LCRA Water Surface Management Programs

512-730-6841

The LCRA '50-Foot Rule' & TPWD's 'No Wake Zone' difference:

The LCRA did not create the Lakewide Authorization as a "no-wake" zone. No-wake zones require permitting and the specifically identified placement and configuration of an established area, and LCRA then registers them with all law enforcement agencies who enforce the Water Safety Act, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Rather, the LCRA Lakewide Authorization prohibits the operation of boat operators from operating their boats at a speed greater than headway speed when operating within 50 feet of ANY shoreline, property, watercraft, person or structure, whether there is a buoy present or not. The Authorization extends the privilege to property owners to place U.S. Coast Guard approved "no-wake" buoys no more than 50 feet from their property (shoreline or structures). They may place just one buoy on the water, or several if they choose. I can see how this could be misinterpreted as a no-wake zone. However, this does not delineate any legal "no-wake" zone pursuant to the Texas Water Safety Act. This rule is only enforceable as a violation of the LCRA Land and Water Use Regulations and not as a violation of the Texas Water Safety Act. The rule essentially provides property owners with additional protective measures to enhance water safety and to minimize the risks of watercraft operating near their property, including LCRA-owned property. The rule was created by LCRA under authority described in Chapter 31.092 (Local Regulations), of the Texas Water Safety Act.

If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Tim Bradle, Supervisor

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