

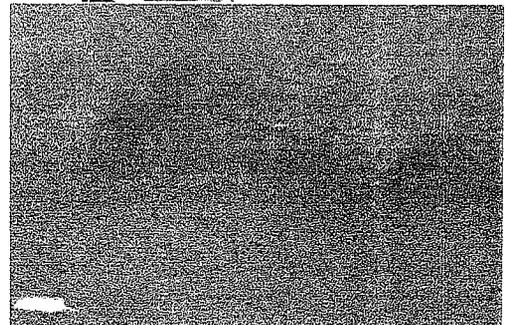
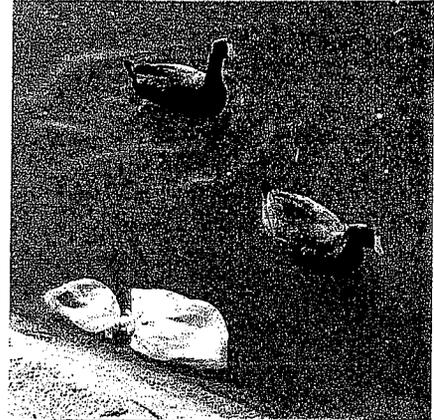
Assessment of Echo Park Lake
State List ID CAL4051501020000228155002

I observed the water quality conditions and reasonable uses of Echo Park Lake on November 19th, 2006 at approximately 2:30pm. The weather conditions were very dry with clear skies and almost no wind intensity.

Echo Park Lake is a body of water in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles, just off the 101 highway. It is currently on the 303(d) list with State impairments involving algae, ammonia, copper, eutrophic/nutrients, lead, odors, PCBs, and pH. All of these impairments have a priority of 3, however no potential sources of impairment have been reported by the state to the EPA. Echo Park Lake currently has an approved/established TMDL for trash as of August 2002. The lake is within the Santa Monica and Los Angeles Watersheds.

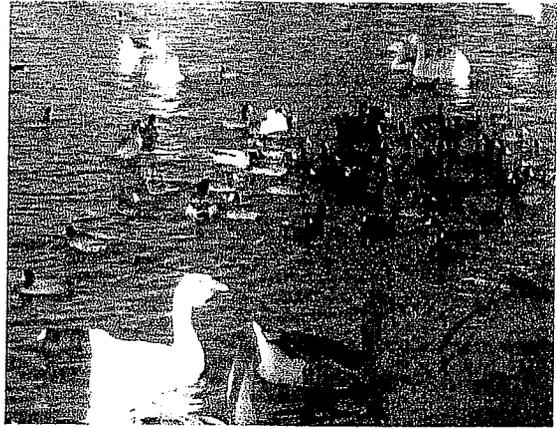
I have listed below my various concerns regarding the water quality and safety hazards that I observed on Sunday, November 19th, 2006.

- **Trash/Debris** - With a tour around the perimeter of the lake, I observed an estimated >50 individual pieces of trash floating on the water surface. Most of this trash consisted of Styrofoam (pieces of used cups and used food containers) and plastics (small trash bags, grocery bags, used plastic utensils). There were also hundreds of cigarette butts scattered on the ground up until several inches from the bank of the lake, so I can only assume that there is also cigarette trash in the water that I did not see. Additionally, I was able to see a large metal barrel about 5 feet from the shore and about 3 feet beneath the surface of the water near the boat rental building. Hopefully these details of my observations of the lake will be helpful as you are collecting public solicitations of water quality data in the region so that the TMDL for trash is most fit to serve its purpose.

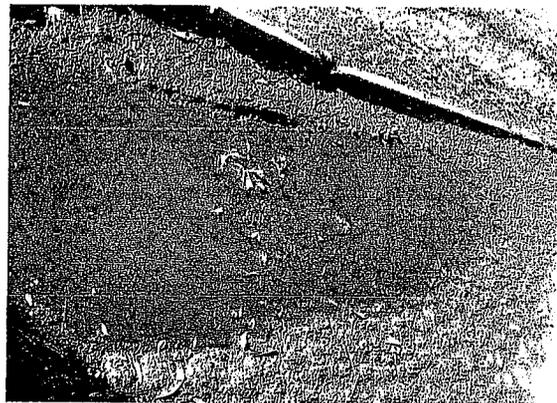


Top: Avian species living with trash. Middle: Trash and debris collection near perimeter of Echo Park Lake. Bottom: Metal barrel submerged under water's surface

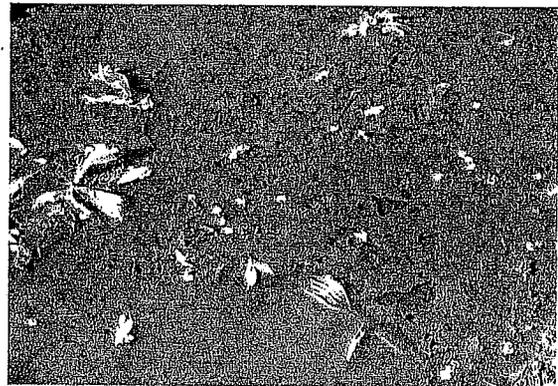
- **Avian (Organic) Waste** – There was a diverse and impressive collection of bird life on the lake. However, one of the most popular activities at the park appeared to be feeding the many species of birds any pieces of bread or other various leftovers from picnics. Although this made a fantastic show for the children, I was concerned with the effects of densely attracting so many birds in such a small space. Some people would coax the birds onshore with food, which resulted in large collections of bird droppings on the sidewalks. I was concerned with the sanitation of this, especially in the proximity of small children who frequently touch the ground. I believe this fact should be integrated into the TMDL for Echo Park Lake.



- **Standing Water** – The trail around the perimeter of the lake was in relatively good condition, however in several places the potholes were filled with water and left to stand for long periods of time. The photographs show algal growth indicative of long-standing water. Since it hasn't rained in Los Angeles in several weeks, I can only assume that this water has another source. I believe this brings up health and safety concerns. It is also only requires the simple remedy of trail repair.

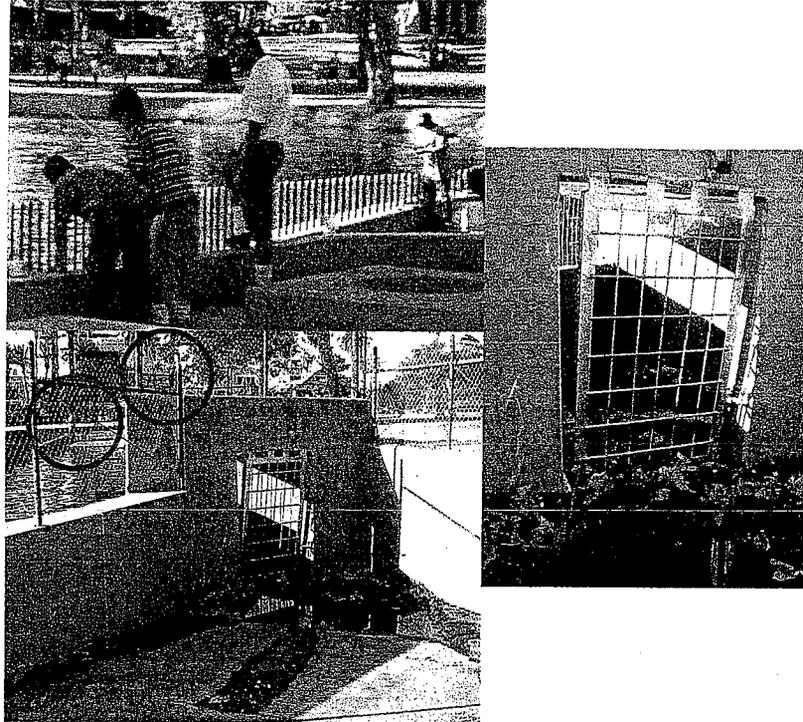


- **Odors** – Although odors were generally light or unnoticeable, they were particularly foul near the north end of the lake, near the two fishing parties. Additionally, odors were present where there were dense masses of birds flocking to the park patrons with bird feed. I do believe this should be added to the Echo Park TMDL.



Above: High density of bird life. Middle: Puddle of standing water. Bottom: Close-up of standing water quality

- **Reasonable Uses** – This was perhaps the safety hazard that concerned me the most. At the north end of the park, I observed two separate parties fishing in Echo Park Lake. I can only hope that it was recreational fishing and that the caught fish were not intended for consumption. The portion of the lake where they were fishing was also the most alarmingly polluted. I do believe this reasonable use should be officially recognized for Echo Park Lake.



Above: Two patrons fishing in Echo Park Lake. Below: Large collection of trash and debris, foul odors, near two fishing patrons (circled in red). Right: Trash and debris near fishing patrons

Considering the large numbers of patrons using the park for recreational purposes on that Sunday afternoon, I was quite impressed with the overall quality of the water in Echo Park Lake. However, the five concerns highlighted in this water quality observation report merit further cleanup efforts through a modified, more appropriate TMDL for trash to include the concerns listed throughout this report.

Report by:
Stephanie Davenport
davenpos@usc.edu
(310) 948-6022