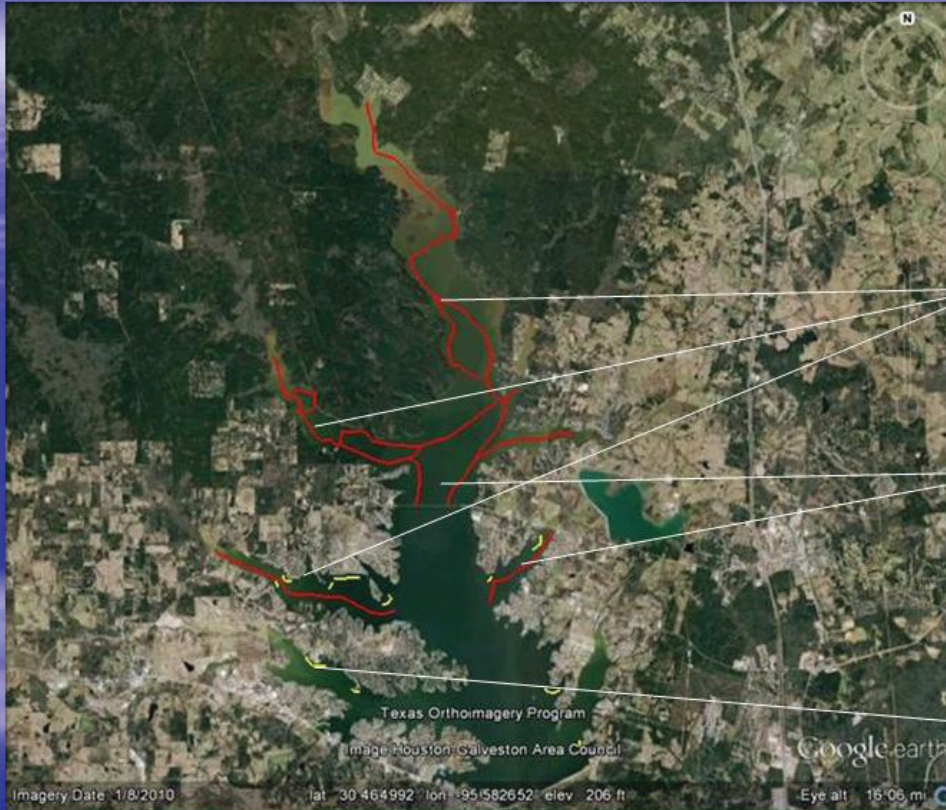




Boat Road Marking Planned for Lake Conroe

By: Mark Webb



Marked boat lanes with minimum clearing required

Cut stick ups and stumps in open water normally navigable

If possible mark shoals and other hazards in open water

Lake Conroe Boat Road Marking Plan

One of the obvious issues with the drought on Lake Conroe is safe navigation of the reservoir with through a myriad of obstacles exposed by the low water. In particular the tops of tall submersed trees scattered in what is usually open water can prove hazardous. Currently it's easier to find your way in the river channel in the upper end of the reservoir since the edges of the river channel are generally defined by the timber on the old river banks, but when the water goes up a few feet finding the clear channel will be much more difficult. With these issues in mind the Lake Conroe Association (LCA) initiated a project led by Ben Richardson (Palms Marina) and Mike Bleier (LCA President) to cut the tops of the tall timber that is now surfacing in deep water to about 8 feet below the current water level. Standing timber provides excellent fish habitat so to reduce any impact trimming these trees may cause the large cut logs will be allowed to

sink next to the submersed portions of the trees. This will create more complex habitat for largemouth bass, crappie, catfish, and other cover loving species. The initial project funding from the LCA was about \$40,000 including a substantial donation from Ben Richardson's family. The plan is for Texas Parks and Wildlife to match that \$40,000 up to 3 to 1 with boating access funds that are part of the Federal Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Access Program giving the project a total budget of up to \$160,000! With this funding the San Jacinto River Authority plans to contract to not only trim the scattered tree tops but to mark and enhance boat roads through standing timber in the backs of Caney Creek and Little Lake Creek and in the upper portion of the reservoir to above the FM 1375 bridge. The boat roads will probably be marked with either buoys in deeper water or signs on large wooden posts driven into the lake bottom in more shal-



low water. The project should be completed sometime this spring.

If you have questions you can contact us at mark.webb@tpwd.state.tx.us or earl.chilton@tpwd.state.tx.us or by calling (979) 272-1430 or (512) 389-4652. ♦