

Mud Still Flowing at Lick Creek

At the **West Cypress Hills** subdivision these days in Western Travis Co., it's news when the development project ("The Showdown at Lick Creek," July 2) survives the week without an admonishment from one regulatory authority or another. That appeared to be the situation at press time.

But neighboring residents who have seen their beloved **Lick Creek** go from clear as glass to clear as mud aren't betting the farm that they've seen the last of the pollution coming from the project's troubled storm-water detention pond and dam. Since March, several stop-work orders from various agencies — the county stepped forward with its first order last week — have so far done little to keep the pond's polluted silt and sludge from getting into the creek. The orders routinely come with a demand to repair the pond, but the repairs tend to beget other problems, with no aggressive enforcement action in-sight.

In any case, developer **Rusty Parker** said Monday that repairs were still underway, but he declined further comment. On Wednesday morning, neighbors reported that bulldozers were active at the dam again and irrigation pipes were being laid elsewhere at the site.

Tom Hegemeir, a water resources engineer with

the Lower Colorado River Authority, met with the development team last week and said the contractor agreed to have a construction superintendent on site daily to ensure that no other environmental mishaps occurred. "It's always good to have a foreman on site," Hegemeir said, "especially on something as sensitive as this."

The pond has been a source of frustration for creekside residents for almost a year. Last week, a Travis Co. inspector issued a stop-work order on the project after an aide to County Commissioner **Gerald Daugherty** discovered workers pumping polluted sludge out of the pond directly into the creek. The waterway had just started to run clear again when the latest incident occurred, residents say.

Neighbors have long questioned the wisdom of building a detention pond and a dam directly on the creek. Little did they know that neither the county, the LCRA, nor the state prohibits such construction. Hegemeir suggested that could change once the LCRA has completed revisions to its nonpoint source pollution ordinance. Area residents, who have organized as the **Guardians of Lick Creek**, may nevertheless file a federal lawsuit against the developer for damaging the creek.

— Amy Smith



Bulldozers at work last week at Lick Creek

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