



Preserve Lake Dunlap Association: Stewardship, Resilience, and Renewal



PLDA Core Purpose

The mission of the Preserve Lake Dunlap Association is to build on a strong tradition of community stewardship and environmental protection. For more than fifty years, these eight core purposes have guided how PLDA protects Lake Dunlap and its watershed:

- Preserve the natural scenic beauty and intrinsic character of Lake Dunlap.
- Prevent pollution, invasive or noxious vegetation, silting, and other environmental threats.
- Enhance the lake's overall quality as a public recreational resource for all users.

- Promote clean water, healthy fisheries, and boating and water safety through education and partnerships with public agencies.
- Protect the watershed and safeguard the health and safety of residents, recreational users, and wildlife.
- Safeguard the essential flow of water from the Comal Springs and its connected systems.
- Provide recommendations to the City of New Braunfels on watershed drainage and runoff management.
- Build a sense of shared responsibility and encourage strong community involvement.

Together, these eight pillars form a unified mission that directs all of PLDA's work. They reflect not just what the organization values, but how it operates—through active advocacy, habitat protection, water quality monitoring, public education, and collaboration with [state](#), [regional](#), [county](#), and [local](#) partners.

A Legacy of Community-Driven Care

This mission is not theoretical—PLDA has consistently lived it. Whether leading cleanup efforts after floods, combating hydrilla, advocating for dam reconstruction, or supporting Edwards Aquifer Authority initiatives, the mission has always been the backbone of PLDA's decisions and actions. It continues to shape the association's work today as watershed challenges grow more complex.

PLDA's story begins in the aftermath of the 1972 New Braunfels flood, when residents along Lake Dunlap came together to restore damaged shorelines and protect the lake they loved. This early grassroots movement formalized into the Lake Dunlap Property Owners Association in 1974, led by longtime resident Ms. Frankie Uhr, who united more than 400 households behind a shared mission of preservation. This spirit of stewardship laid the foundation for decades of organized action.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Lake Dunlap faced one of its greatest ecological threats: invasive hydrilla. As thick vegetation spread across the lake, choking boating channels and degrading water quality, PLDA—renamed the Preserve Lake Dunlap Association to reflect its broader mission—launched a multiyear campaign in partnership with Texas Parks & Wildlife, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), and regional conservation groups. Through vegetation control programs and the introduction of sterile grass carp, PLDA helped deliver one of the most effective hydrilla-mitigation efforts in the state.

Strengthening Organizational Capacity

Recognizing the need for long-term organizational strength, PLDA pursued and earned 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in 2013. This allowed the association to expand fundraising, increase outreach, develop environmental programs, and represent the community more effectively in regional policy discussions.

Leadership Through the 2019 Dam Failure

PLDA's defining modern chapter unfolded on May 14, 2019, when the nearly century-old Dunlap Dam suffered a catastrophic mechanical failure that drained the lake within hours. The event fundamentally altered the community—impacting ecosystems, recreation, property values, and local identity.

PLDA immediately activated its network, becoming the central organizing body for residents, stakeholders, and agencies. The association coordinated information, held community forums, engaged state and local officials, and supported the creation of the [Lake Dunlap](#) Water Control & Improvement District (WCID). Their advocacy helped advance legislative, engineering, and financing pathways that enabled the dam's reconstruction—establishing a model for addressing aging river infrastructure across Texas.

A Refilled Lake and Renewed Community

In October 2023, Lake Dunlap was officially refilled. Prior to this milestone, PLDA supported lakebed cleanup, funded and placed fish habitat structures, and helped coordinate restocking efforts to ensure a healthy ecological restart. The return of the lake marked not only an engineering achievement but a testament to sustained community resilience.

Continuing the Work of Stewardship

Today, PLDA remains one of the region's most active watershed organizations, expanding efforts that include:

- Supporting Edwards Aquifer ~~Authority~~ Habitat Conservation Plan initiatives
- Monitoring and communicating about water quality and watershed conditions
- Addressing floating litter and vegetation mats entering Lake Dunlap
- Promoting boating and water safety education
- Building community involvement through volunteer programs and public meetings

How the Community Can Support PLDA

Residents, ~~and area~~ supporters, and users of Lake Dunlap can strengthen PLDA's mission by becoming members or sponsors, volunteering at cleanups and events, attending watershed and district meetings, and staying connected through the association's website, email list, and social channels.

PLDA's work ensures that Lake Dunlap remains a thriving, healthy, and enjoyable resource for future generations—perfectly aligned with GEAA's vision of resilient waterways, sustainable ecosystems, and informed, community-centered stewardship.

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