

Water Conservation and Drought

Michael A. Murphy
Water Conservation Manager



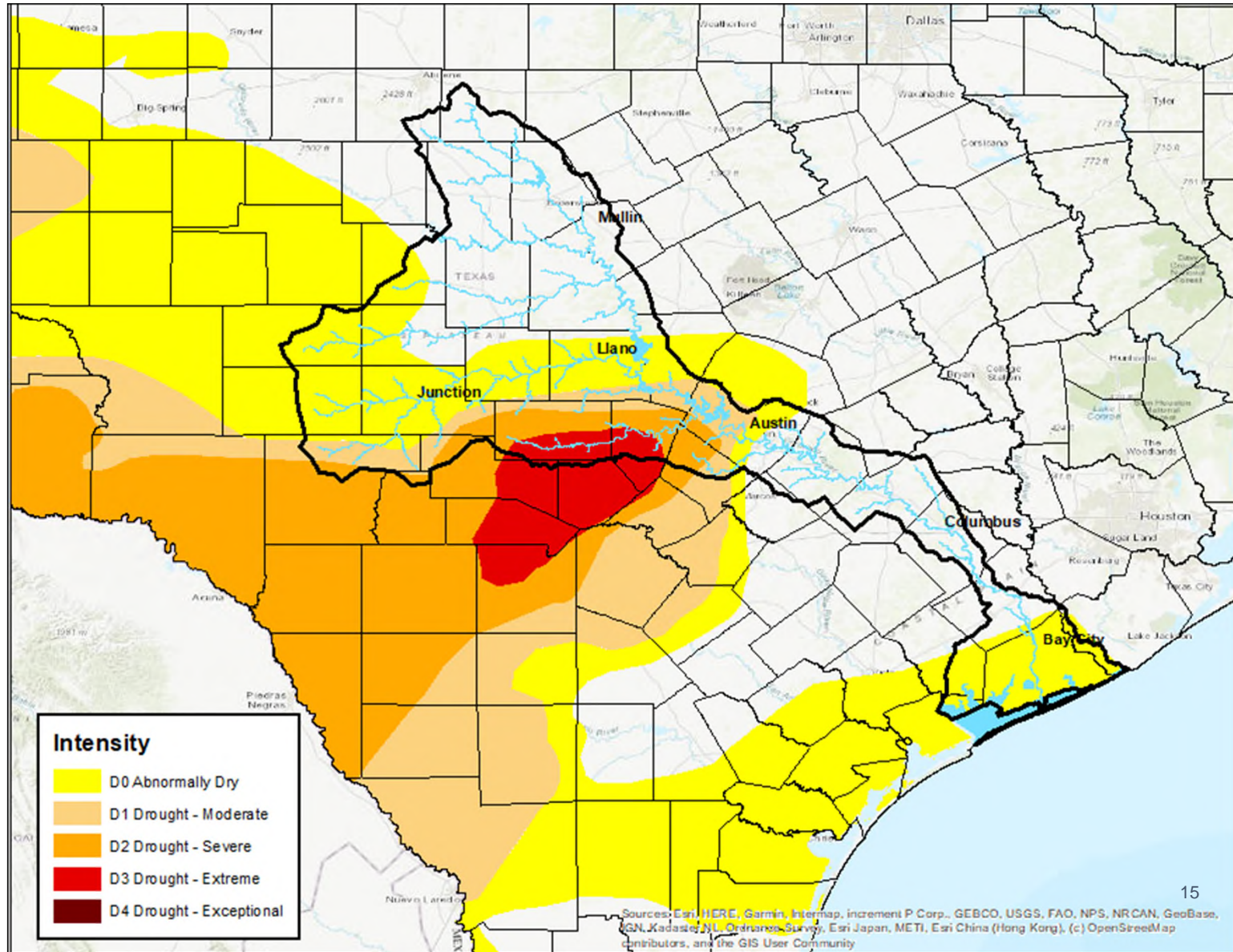
Floods and Droughts



U.S. Drought Monitor

Lower Colorado River Basin

As of May 14, 2024



Water Supply Reservoirs

Lake Buchanan



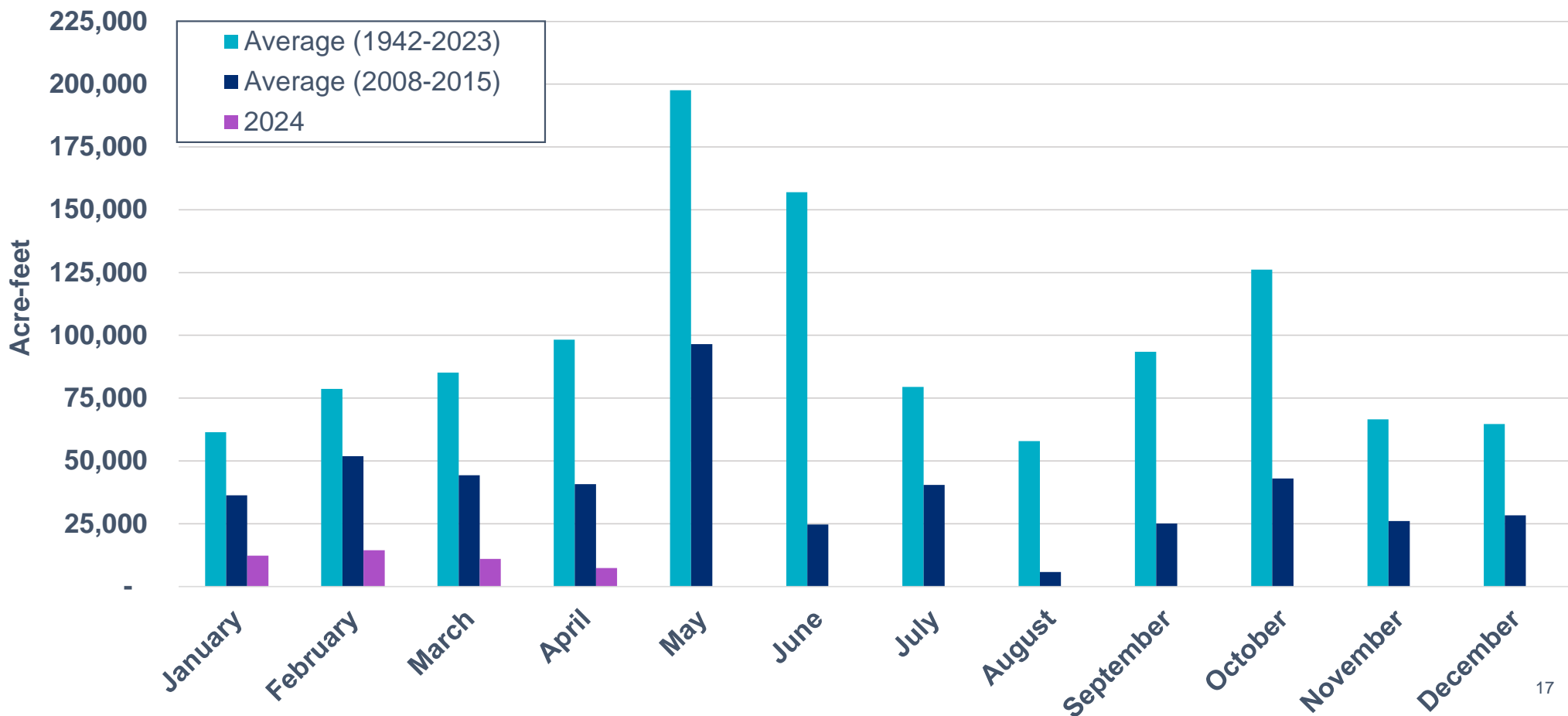
68% Full

Lake Travis



40% Full

Water Flowing Into Lakes Buchanan and Travis [as of April 1, 2024]



Lake Level Comparisons

	May 15, 2023	May 21, 2024
Lake Travis (feet msl)	638.51	633.02
Lake Buchanan (feet msl)	1,001.56	1006.57
Combined storage* (a-f)	1,020,173	1,052,023

*For purposes of the 2020 Water Management Plan, the combined storage is defined as the total of the daily average volume of water in lakes Buchanan and Travis. This determination excludes any water in Lake Buchanan above elevation 1,018 feet msl in the months of May through October or above 1,020 feet msl in the months of November through April and any water in Lake Travis above elevation 681 feet msl.

Managing Water Supply Through Drought

Tools in our toolbox





Drought Response: Stage 2

Once-per-week watering schedule

Demand reduction goal of 20%

Benefit of Once-Per-Week Watering Schedule

Going from watering twice per week to watering once per week reduces annual water use by about 7-12%



LCRA's Drought Contingency Plan Update

- What's new?
 - Changed to a mandatory response in Stage 1
 - Added an inflows-based trigger in Stage 2 to initiate water use reductions sooner in very dry conditions
 - Added a new drought contingency plan stage
 - Added required minimum measures related to outdoor watering for each stage
 - Defined specific storage level exiting criteria for each drought stage

Minimum Response Measures



Stage 1

Increased enforcement of twice weekly watering schedule



Stage 2

Maximum once weekly watering schedule



Stage 3

Automatic irrigation limited to six hours per week



Stage 4

Handheld watering only for essential uses: foundations, trees, vegetable gardens

LCRA Water Conservation Plan Strategies



Water Conservation Incentive Programs

- **LCRA Firm Water Customer Conservation Cost-Share Program**
 - Expand customer base, eligibility, participation, evaluate rule changes
- **LCRA WaterSmart Rebates Program**
 - Increase participation, evaluate potential new incentives such as converting turf to native landscapes



Beyond Conservation

No Highland Lakes water for most downstream interruptible agricultural operations since July 2022

Adding new supplies



What the Future Holds



Conservation + New Supplies

Will need both conservation and new supplies to meet our water needs in the future

Questions?

www.lcra.org/contactlcra