

## Walker Partners Interview: Helping Texas Stop Zebra Mussels from Jeopardizing Drinking Water

CEDAR PARK, Texas (KXAN) - Lurking beneath the waters of Lake Travis are thousands of zebra mussels.

"You're going to notice them more and more," said Aaron Archer, client manager with engineering firm Walker Partners.

The Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority, Cedar Park, Leander and Round Rock are working with the firm to design a chemical treatment station at the Cedar Park Water Treatment Plant, to prevent mussels from sticking to and clogging three floating water intakes on Lake Travis.

"The intake has screens on it that filters things out of the water and so we are going to put special coatings there that make it so they can't attach to it," explains Archer.

They'll also put an oxidant in the water so mussels don't jam the pipes. "They're going to continue to float through that pipeline back to the treatment plant where we can remove them," said Archer.

That oxidant is called Permanganate, which is approved by the state and Archer says is safe to drink. It's used for water treatment to control taste and odor, iron and manganese.

Lyndsey Fekete likes to camp out near Lake Travis from time to time.

Starting before there's a problem makes sense to Fekete, who gets her water from the lake. "Working on it five years ahead of time is way better than working on it while it's happening," said Fekete.

If left untreated, the mussels could clog the entire pipeline. "It could reduce the capacity of the system so you'd be able to pump less water," explains Archer.

The Zebra Mussel Control Project will cost \$1.3 million. Cedar Park will pay for nearly half of the cost with \$663,559. The city of Leander will shell out \$516,922 and Round Rock will pay \$165,905. [Round Rock City Council will vote on its part of the agreement \(https://roundrock.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3495188&GUID=38AD4618-AB7D-4253-907D-369438829BF0&Options=&Search=&FullText=1\)](https://roundrock.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3495188&GUID=38AD4618-AB7D-4253-907D-369438829BF0&Options=&Search=&FullText=1) at this Thursday's meeting. Leander is expected to vote next week.

If approved, the treatment would take effect early next year.

See the TV piece [here \(http://www.kxan.com/news/local/williamson-county/cities-hope-to-stop-zebra-mussels-from-jeopardizing-drinking-water/1165431535\)](http://www.kxan.com/news/local/williamson-county/cities-hope-to-stop-zebra-mussels-from-jeopardizing-drinking-water/1165431535).

Posted on Tue, May 8, 2018 by Christine Hollinden

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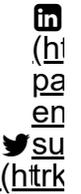
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