

City joins Caddo salvinia battle

By Steve Bandy, News Messenger

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Recognizing that the spread of giant salvinia could, in time, threaten the city's water supply as well as have a negative impact on the local economy, members of the Marshall City Commission have agreed to participate in efforts to control and eradicate the invasive vegetation on Caddo Lake. Commissioners voted unanimously Thursday night to allocate \$25,000 to the effort.

"As you know, there's a concerted effort under way on Caddo Lake to control and, hopefully, eventually eradicate giant salvinia," City Manager Frank Johnson said. "Now they're ready to start another aspect with mechanical harvesting. This money will be used in that effort."

The contribution from the city will be made to the Caddo Lake Institute, which is managing this effort. Mayor William "Buddy" Power told commissioners that he had been to Florida and California to view this new method of controlling invasive vegetation and that it appears to be successful in removing large amounts from water bodies.

"We're ready to go, at least to test it locally to see if this mechanical harvester will do what we hope it will do here," Power told the commission. "It's in the water and all we're waiting for is the funding."

By resolution, commissioners noted that if giant salvinia is not controlled on the lake, it could threaten the city's point of intake for its water supply a few miles upstream on Cypress Bayou.

In addition, the resolution recognizes Caddo Lake as "a treasured and unique resource" from which the city benefits economically "from people who come to the area to enjoy the unique scenic beauty ... observe wildlife, fish, hunt and enjoy other water sports and outdoor activities," activities also enjoyed by citizens of Marshall.

"Because of the threat posed to economic and recreational opportunities and the threat to the city of Marshall's water supply on Cypress Bayou, the city commission finds that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Marshall that the city participate in the effort to control and eradicate" the giant salvinia, the resolution states.

Johnson reminded that commissioners included \$25,000 in the 2009 budget for the city to participate in this effort. However, the resolution does not limit the city's participation to this donation only.

The resolution authorizes the expenditure of "resources including but not necessarily limited to financial resources and including but not necessarily limited to a donation to the organization or organizations" involved in the efforts to control and eradicate the giant salvinia.

"This problem is not going to be cured with \$25,000 or \$250,000 for that matter," Power said. Commissioner Ed Hoffman added that Caddo Lake "is a great asset to Marshall and Harrison County and whatever we can do to help we should."
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