

Editorial from the Marshall News Messenger:

OUR VIEW

More proof of Caddo's place in the world

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Realistically, there are not all that many things in Harrison County that draw the attention of the world-wide audience. Certainly we think this area is special for a number of reasons, but that fact is not widely recognized on another continent.

But one attribute that is noted around the world is Caddo Lake and its environs. Our wetlands area is internationally recognized and experts from around the globe — as well as those who simply enjoy environmental tourism — are beginning to respond by making trips to our area.

Three such experts were in town this week to tour the area as part of a State Department program designed to foster more understanding between nations.

The visitors this week were from Brazil and Paraguay and they all work in what just might be the largest wetland in the world — Pantanal, an area in South America that covers some 75,000 square miles. To get a grip on the size, it is more than one-fourth the size of Texas.

It is hoped that the experts can both learn something from their trip here and, importantly, that they can teach us a little. All wetlands are extremely sensitive areas and require constant vigilance of the impacts of what is going on around them.

This is especially true for Caddo Lake, which is being endangered by a number of factors, perhaps the biggest of which is the number of invasive and damaging plant species which have been introduced into the area. There are no easy answers for the invasive species and it will take years to solve the problem, if it can be solved.

Likewise, there are also the coal-fired power plants which, through air pollution, end up polluting the lake. Given this nation's energy problems and the rising price of oil, we don't forecast that America will be turning away from coal anytime soon. This is a longer-range problem, but is every bit as serious as the invasive plant issue — it is just more difficult to see with the naked eye.

In the past few years we believe our local community has begun to come together to better understand the importance of Caddo Lake. These visits by foreign experts put the exclamation point on that move and tell us we are going in the right direction.

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