

## Navigation District chairman gives giant salvinia status report

By Sandra Cason, News Messenger

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A concerted attack on giant salvinia in Caddo Lake is predicted to be costly, Harrison County Commissioners were told Monday.

In a status report before the court, Ken Shaw, chairman of Cypress Valley Navigation District, said the estimated 2008 total is \$671,045 for both sides of the lake.



Courtney Case/ News Messenger  
(ENLARGE)

A member of the Greater Caddo Lake Association Spray Team hits a patch of giant salvinia during a tour of Caddo Lake for U.S. Rep. Louie Gohmert on Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2007 in Uncertain.

The figure for that portion of Caddo which lies in Louisiana is \$292,795, while the Texas total is expected to be \$378,250.

Expenses for the Texas fight are divided between two groups — the navigation district, \$215,000; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, \$163,000.

The navigation district identifies it needs \$74,500 for equipment and supplies, \$83,200 for herbicides and \$57,500 for salaries.

Wildlife department needs include \$33,000 for surveys and analysis, \$50,000 for introduction of giant salvinia weevils and hydrilla flies, and \$80,000 for helicopter applications.

The navigation district is about \$16,000 short, Shaw said, having received \$95,000 from the wildlife department, \$35,000 from Alcoa, \$29,000 from Texas Commission on

Environmental Quality and \$40,000 from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for this year.

Shaw said the shortfall will be negated if the district is able to procure an air boat from the wildlife department.

Rather than spend \$40,000 for a new boat, Shaw said, the district will spend between \$5,000 and \$10,000 to install a new engine in a boat the wildlife department intends to discard.

"This is becoming a very serious issue for most reservoirs," Shaw said of giant salvinia, noting Caddo Lake is on the forefront of fighting what has been called the world's worst weed.

The erection of a two-mile long barricade at the point where giant salvinia first came across the state line from the dam in Louisiana is an effort at control that has attracted media attention nationwide, Shaw said. "No one else has taken this type of action.

"Salvinia is resistant to cold weather," he added, although the weed does not multiply as quickly during colder months.

"On warm days it grows. On cold days it does not grow. It's just waiting for the sun to come out" and it will "double in size every week," Shaw said.

An August 2007 survey by the wildlife department indicates there are between 50 and 100 acres of giant salvinia in the Texas side of the lake and about 600 acres on the Louisiana side.

Outbreaks of salvinia have been noted in Ames Springs Basin, Big Green Brake, Buzzard Bay, Carter Lake, Clinton Lake, Little Green Brake, Old House Slough, Peach Orchard, Sand Island, Swanson's Landing, Tar Island and Turtle Shell.

When spraying begins this spring, efforts will also be aimed at eradicating hydrilla, which covers 4,184 acres and water hyacinths, which infest 3,663 acres of Caddo Lake, Shaw said.

The following is a time line of the Texas fight.

June 2006 — Giant salvinia is discovered in Jeems Bayou, La.

February 2007 — Flooding flushes giant salvinia into Big Lake, Texas.

Feb. 20, 2007 — An emergency summit meeting, held in Jefferson, is attended by representatives of Harrison County, Northeast Texas Municipal Water District, Greater Caddo Lake Association, Cypress Valley Navigation District, and a member of Texas Rep. Stephen Frost's staff.

March 1, 2007 — A rapid response budget committee is formed and \$65,000 is committed to the fight.

Allocations come from Harrison County, \$10,000; city of Marshall, \$17,500; AEP/SWEPCO, \$5,000; Northeast Texas Municipal Water District, \$10,000; Cypress Valley Navigation District, \$20,000; Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, \$2,500.

March 20, 2007 — Infestation is discovered in Big Green Brake/Tar Island.

May to June, 2007 — A total of 1,000 volunteer hours are spent to erect a \$35,000, two-mile long barricade across Caddo Lake, west of the Louisiana and Texas line.

May 2007 — Small outbreaks are detected at various Texas locations.

June 2007 — Barricade cleaning a giant salvinia spraying begins, with Greater Caddo Lake Association providing boats, sprayers and chemicals, and Cypress Valley Navigation District bearing the costs of labor.

Aug. 29, 2007 — A tour by U.S. Rep. Louie Gohmert results in a commission to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to develop a management plan for aquatic nuisance vegetation on Caddo Lake in both states.

Sept. 2007 — Texas Legislature approves \$120,000 in funding for the navigation district for each of the next two years.

Nov. 17, 2007 — TPWD presents a nuisance aquatic vegetation management plan to Gohmert, which includes controls for giant salvinia, water hyacinths and hydrilla.

Current — Barricade cleaning and maintenance continues, along with herbicide spraying.

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